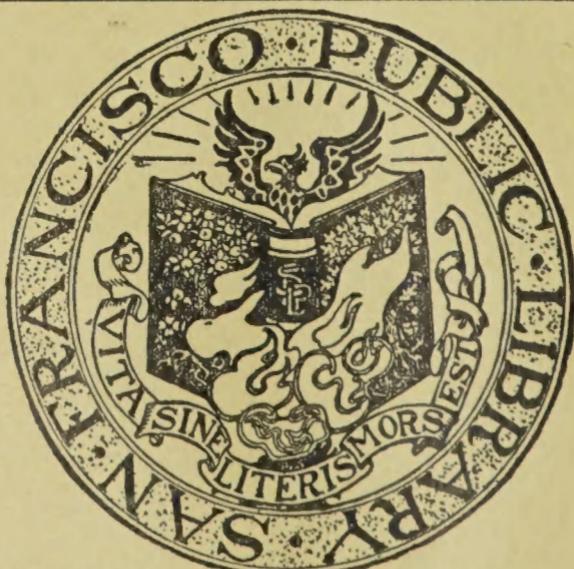




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# HEROES OF THE EUROPEAN NATIONS

BY

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AUTHOR OF "THE WORLD OF TO-DAY" ETC.



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# HEROES OF THE EUROPEAN NATIONS

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## The Greeks and Trojans

In very early times, several great empires flourished in Asia, as did Egypt on the Nile. Even older than Egypt, perhaps, was Chaldaea, about the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, where afterwards grew up the conquering powers of Assyria and Babylon. But of these states, of their greatness and their fall, we know little, except from their ruined palaces and temples dug out in what are now barren deserts. Some of the buried ancient cities discovered in our time seem to be thousands of years old; and their remains show such skill and magnificence, that the people who built them must have been many centuries growing out of barbarism to so high a point of civilization. All peoples began as savages, like those still living in out-of-the-way parts of the world; and it is but slowly that wandering tribes become great nations, able to build cities such as Babylon and the Assyrian capital Nineveh were in their glory.

We know more of Egypt than of other early states; because fragments and hints of its story are carved or painted on ancient tombs and temples that, like its massive Pyramids, have been preserved by the singularly dry air of the Nile Valley. Another great nation on the shores of

the Mediterranean, the Phœnicians, were the first famous sailors of antiquity, said to have voyaged as far as what was then the barbarous land of Britain, in search of the tin still mined in Cornwall. In those eastern lands are found very ancient instruments of bronze, which is made by hardening copper with tin; and as there is no tin in that part of the world, it must have been gained by commerce with distant countries. Perhaps as old as any nation is China, which still remains a great empire; but it was so long cut off from the rest of the world, that its early history is even less known than that of lands mentioned in our oldest books.

The first country in Europe that rose to fame was Greece, which, with its many islands as stepping-stones between the two continents, had a close connection with Asia. The first famous story that brings Europe and Asia into contact is that of the war against Troy, well remembered because it has been told in Homer's *Iliad*, one of the oldest and greatest poems, long believed to have been written down from the songs of a blind old man. But whether such a person as Homer ever lived is uncertain; and still less can we be sure about the story told under his name in a childish age, when men were not so keen to know the truth as to hear an exciting tale, the more wonderful the better.

Troy was a town in the north-west corner of the peninsula called by the ancients Asia Minor, whose coasts and islands came to be often visited by Greek sailors, many of them settling here as colonists. It may be that the story told about Troy has a core of fact, round which gathered all the legends and fables woven together in the *Iliad*, so called from Ilium, another name for Troy. According to this romantic tale,

more than a thousand years before Christ Troy had a king named Priam, whose son Paris went to Greece and carried off Helen, said to be the most beautiful woman in the world, from her husband, Menelaus, the king of Sparta. Menelaus asked the other Greek princes to help him in winning back his wife; and a great army was raised under command of Agamemnon, a king of the southern peninsula of Greece called the Peloponnesus, in modern times named the Morea. The Greek army under Agamemnon sailed to Asia, and lay encamped about Troy for ten years without being able to take it, so boldly fought the Trojans, with Priam's eldest son Hector for their chief champion.

Agamemnon is represented as tall, noble, and heroic, a true king of men; but the *Iliad* does not say much about his exploits. Its hero is rather a chief named Achilles, who, having quarrelled with Agamemnon, for a time sulked in his tent, refusing to fight against the Trojans, as they kept on sallying forth to attack the Greeks without the walls of Troy. But when his great friend Patroclus was killed by Hector, Achilles rushed into the battle with such revengeful fury that all the Trojans fled before him, even Hector, whom he pierced with his spear, and tied the body to his chariot to drive it insultingly round the city.

Still Troy was not taken, and at the end of ten years the Greeks had grown weary of the siege. Just as they were about to give it up, however, they hit on a trick, the account of which seems to show the whole story a fable. Pretending to go away to their ships, they left behind them a huge wooden horse filled with armed men. The exulting Trojans carried this trophy into the city, though some of them had sense enough to guess that it must

hide some treachery. Through the night the Greeks inside of it stole out to open the gates to their comrades, who had come back under the walls; and that was the last night of Troy, its houses burned and plundered, and its people massacred as they tried to escape.

Some few did get away, whose imaginary adventures are told in another great poem called the *Æneid*, written by the Roman poet Virgil. Its hero is Æneas, a Trojan chief who was believed to have gone to Italy, and there to have founded the Roman nation. One of his descendants named Brute is given out as sailing to Britain and landing in Devonshire; but this is a more unlikely story than any. As for the Greeks, they went home to meet with other extraordinary adventures related by several poets of old. Agamemnon himself is said to have been treacherously murdered by his wife, who had married another husband in his long absence; and this was but the beginning of a long tragedy of crime and misfortune spun out in the great Greek plays so well known to scholars.

“Great men lived before Agamemnon,” says an ancient writer, and goes on to tell us how their very names are forgotten for want of a poet to make them famous. The tale of Troy in which this king plays such a part is not to be taken as true, but as an example of how history came first to be written. For hundreds of years later we have little to go upon but poetic legends that often seem hardly more to be trusted than the tale of Cinderella or of Jack the Giant-killer.

## Lycurgus and Solon

FROM ABOUT B.C. 800 TO B.C. 600

The Greeks, so illustrious of old, knew little or nothing of their own early history. One story is that they came from Egypt into Greece. There we find them not so much a nation as a gathering of small states, each no more than one town with the land around it. These states were often at war with one another; or some of them might join in leagues for common defence against others. But all Greeks held in reverence certain celebrated temples, like that of Delphi, at which met councils of the states to settle their disputes and other matters of common interest. They also came together for games, the chief ones being those held every four years at Olympia, where athletes from different parts contended in racing, wrestling, boxing, and other sports, as well as in music and poetry. Such meetings went to make the Greeks feel that they were one people, who spoke the same language, and, though they might fall out among themselves, should stand together against the foreigners whom they haughtily spoke of as "barbarians".

In the southern peninsula of Greece, the principal state was for long Sparta, that gained a name in history through its system of laws designed to make the people brave and hardy. These laws were said to have been made by a Spartan named Lycurgus, who lived so long ago that the date of his life is hardly known. The story was that he travelled over other countries to study the best laws and customs, then, on his return, was allowed to reform the ways of his own countrymen. The laws he drew up did not please all the people, especially the rich men, whom he ordered to share their wealth with

the poor. It is told that one of the discontented citizens was so angry that he struck Lycurgus with a stick, and put out one of his eyes, but was moved to repentance when he saw how gently the lawgiver bore this injury, not caring to punish his assailant. Another tale is that, having finished his work, Lycurgus went away from Sparta, getting the people to take an oath that they would keep his laws till he came back; then he took care never to come back.

Perhaps the truth of these legends is that one man of strong character and noble aims did have great influence upon the Spartans, so that they came to admire his simple, unselfish life. The manners and customs of a people are not easily changed all at once. But in the course of time, from example and precept of men like Lycurgus, the Spartans certainly grew to have a remarkable fearlessness of danger, with a scorn of ease and daintiness that have become proverbial. Rich and poor ate together of the same plain food, a dish called "black broth" being the common one at the public tables. Nobody was allowed to pamper or coddle himself; and to discourage luxury the only money used was of iron, which made wealth a heavy burden. Yet these citizens were not so poor but that they had slaves to work for them—a mean class called Helots, treated scornfully and harshly by their proud masters. It is said that a Spartan father would make a Helot helplessly drunk as a lesson to his sons what a shameful thing drunkenness is for a free man.

One striking feature of the laws attributed to Lycurgus was the care given to a peculiar system of education. When quite young, boys were taken from their parents to be brought up in public schools, where the main

lesson taught them was courage and fortitude. They competed with each other in bearing such cruel lashes, that sometimes a lad would, without a cry, let himself be scourged to death at the altar of Diana, one of their deities, to whom such inflictions were taken as a sacrifice. There is a well-known tale of the Spartan boy who, as he stood by at a religious ceremony, was burned by a hot coal falling into his sleeve, but did not move or speak lest he should disturb the priests. Such boys grew up into brave and hardy soldiers, whose own mothers, when they went out to war, would bid them not to come back unless dead or victorious. Another thing they were taught was to hold their tongues unless they had something to say, and not to chatter or babble about trifles. Hence, Laconia or Lacedæmon being another name of Sparta, we get the word "laconic" for a speech that is short and to the point.

The great rival of Sparta was Athens, the foremost state in the northern part of Greece. In early days of their history the Athenians determined to have no more kings, but to make their government a republic, in which magistrates should be chosen by vote of the people. Unfortunately they quarrelled so much over their elections, and were so ungrateful to their best rulers, that more than once they fell under the power of a tyrant who managed for a time to make himself master over his fellow-citizens.

At one time they agreed to ask a certain Draco to be their lawgiver, as Lycurgus was believed to have been for the Spartans. Draco was more severe than wise, for he ordered that every crime, the smallest theft as well as murder, should be punished by death. Hence his laws were said to be written not in ink but in

blood; and a very hard rule is often spoken of as *Draconian*.

Such stern laws could not be carried out; and later on the Athenians invited Solon to make new ones for them. This worthy, whose name, like Solomon's, has become a proverb for wisdom, was one of several sages remembered as the Seven Wise Men of Greece. He seems to have been honest as well as wise, for when his friends were for having him make himself king of Athens, as he might have done, he refused, yet did his best to draw up a code of laws under which all the citizens should live peaceably together.

His laws were much more mild than those of Draco; and from all we know of them, they appear intended to be fair both to rich and poor. He settled the government in what we should call two houses of parliament, one of old men who had served the state as magistrates, and another of four hundred members elected by the people. He did away with bad old customs, and brought in better ones. Especially he tried to encourage trade and industry. One of his new laws was that a son should not be bound to support his father in old age, if the father had not taught him some trade to earn a living by. Solon seems even to have done something towards protecting poor slaves, who, in these ancient republics, were treated like cattle by their masters.

When he had finished writing his laws, it is said that, like Lycurgus, he made the Athenians swear to keep them faithfully, then left Greece for ten years that the fickle people might not be able to ask him to change them. He travelled in Egypt and in Asia Minor, where stories came to be told of his wise sayings, notably on a visit to Croesus, the king of Lydia.

This king is remembered by his reputation for riches, so that we still call a very rich man a Croesus. But when he showed his treasures of gold and jewels to Solon, he was surprised that the wise man did not seem to think much of them. "Have you ever known a happier man than me?" asked Croesus. Yes, said Solon, he had known a man more to be envied, one who was neither rich nor poor, but had lived honestly and died nobly for his country, after bringing up a family of good sons. "Then you do not count me among happy men?" cried the angry king. "Call no man happy till he comes to die," was the sage's answer.

It is also related that Æsop, famous as a writer of fables, who had been present at this meeting, gave Solon advice that kings should be told what they like to hear. "Nay," replied Solon, "but what it is good for them to hear!" And in time Croesus had cause to remember what Solon told him, that whoever had more iron (meaning weapons) could soon be master of all his gold. His kingdom was conquered by Cyrus, who ordered the rich king to be burned alive. When on the point of such a fearful death, Croesus thrice called out Solon's name; then being asked the meaning of this, he repeated the wise man's warning to put no trust in riches. Cyrus was so much struck by that saying, that he not only spared his captive's life, but treated him kindly; and, after all, it was Cyrus who died first.

Solon is said to have gone back to Athens, where he found that his good laws had been thrown away on the foolish citizens; and their quarrels soon set over them another ruler, Pisistratus, who was a king in all but name. But all treated Solon with respect till he died at a good old age. One of the sayings handed down from

him is that he grew old always learning something new.

### Cyrus

ABOUT B.C. 550

The first great Asian power that comes clearly into touch with Europe is that of Persia, originally a small country in the south of what is now called by this name, which grew to take in all the lands lying between the Mediterranean and the Caspian Sea, and stretched its dominion still farther towards India.

Of the beginnings of Persia we know little but by legends hardly truer than fairy tales. Such stories are told of Cyrus, famed as the founder of the Persian Empire. It is said that his grandfather was warned by a dream how this child would make himself king, and that he gave orders for it to be killed. But, like many another hero of romance, the infant Cyrus was spared by the man charged to kill him, who gave him to be secretly reared by a herdsman. It is said also, that as a poor boy he grew up so active and hardy, that his playfellows chose him to be their king or leader in sports, and thus fulfilled the prophecy that had frightened his grandfather, who seems to be the Ahasuerus of the Bible. Another set of legends represents the youth as visiting his grandfather's court, where he gave away all the presents made him, refused to drink wine when he was not thirsty, and despised the lazy, effeminate habits of rich men, who thought eating and drinking the best of life. But these various tales contradict one another; indeed one can seldom repeat what passed for history in those days without often having to put "it is said", or "the story is", about matters not known for certain.

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This much appears a fact, that the Persians, who afterwards became corrupted by the wealth they won from other people, were in early days a race of brave and sturdy mountaineers, well fitted to be conquering warriors. With Cyrus as their leader they mastered the Medes, their neighbours to the north; and under his rule were joined the two nations mentioned together in the Bible as the “Medes and Persians”. Cyrus led an army into Asia Minor, where, as we have heard, he conquered Croesus, king of Lydia, also the Greek colonies on the coast, through which Persia, later on, was drawn into its great war with Greece. He next marched against Babylon in the plains of Mesopotamia, and took that city, as is told in the Bible, by turning aside the waters of the Euphrates that flowed through it, so as to make the dry bed of the river an open way for his soldiers.

The last expedition of Cyrus was against the Scythians in south-eastern Europe, a wild people of wandering herdsmen, belonging probably to the same race as the Tartars of Central Asia. To make war on these barbarians gave more trouble and danger than honour, for the Scythians, almost living on horseback, could easily keep out of the way of an army, attacking it when and where they pleased, and letting the soldiers starve on the bare plains of their country. As for anything to be gained in such a war, the Scythians were a proverb among their richer neighbours for rude poverty. One of the famous stories of antiquity is about a Scythian, asked by a certain king if he did not feel cold without clothes. “Do you feel your face cold?” was the answer; and the savage warrior added: “I am all face!”

Such hardy horsemen had a great advantage in being able to move about rapidly, with no other burden than

their arms and some handfuls of food. So Cyrus, who had conquered great kingdoms, failed to bring the naked Scythians under his power. He is said to have been killed in a battle with them, leaving an empire that was for a time to be the greatest in the world. Another story is that he died peacefully at home, buried under a monument with this inscription: "*I am Cyrus, the founder of the Persian Empire: envy me not the little earth that covers my body*".

### The Persian War

ABOUT B.C. 490-480

In our day Persia is such a poor and ill-governed country that we can hardly understand how once it had nearly conquered the most civilized part of Europe. This was the little land of Greece, that then, like Britain, sent out colonies to the shores of other countries, and founded many flourishing cities in Asia Minor. About 500 years before our era, some of these colonies were helped by Greece to resist the Persians; and thus began a war that lasted many years.

To punish the Greeks for their interference in Asia, the Persian king, Darius, sent a large fleet and army against them, that advanced triumphantly as far as the plain of Marathon, on the sea-shore, about twenty miles from Athens. Most of the smaller states were ready to give in to such a powerful enemy; and the Spartans, though willing to fight, would not march before the full moon, as was their superstitious custom. About 10,000 Athenians, then, with only a few other Greek soldiers, had to face more than ten times their number of Persians. This little Greek army, strongly posted on the hills above

the plain, had ten generals, who took command in turn, day about; and most of these were against risking a battle, the glory of which would fall to the leader for the day. But one of the ten, Aristides, known as the "Just", on account of his virtues, unselfishly persuaded the rest into giving up the command to Miltiades as the best soldier. Miltiades boldly led the army down into the plain; where, after a hot fight, the Persians were driven back to their ships, some of these being set on fire before they could be pushed off, and many of the fugitives were drowned. Over the slain on the field was raised a great mound of earth, that may still be seen, as a memorial of that battle of Marathon (B.C. 490), the first of the famous encounters between Greeks and Persians.

Darius died before he could avenge this defeat, but left his design for conquering Greece to his son Xerxes, who got together what seemed the largest army ever known in the world. He is said to have gathered millions of men and thousands of ships from all parts of his wide dominions. Over the Hellespont, the narrow strait that divides Europe from Asia, he built a bridge of boats, and through the isthmus joining Mount Athos to the mainland he dug a canal for the passage of his ships. Such labours were carried out by hosts of slaves, scourged to their work; and the story goes that when his bridge was destroyed by a storm, this proud despot ordered the sea to be chained and punished with lashes for rebelling against his will. Another story represents him as reviewing that mighty armada; then, as his heart swelled for pride to see the land covered with his armies and the sea with his ships, all at once another mood came upon him, and he burst into tears at the

thought how in a few years not one of all those warriors would be left alive, not even himself, who boasted to be the greatest among mortal men.

Though the Greeks must have heard of all these preparations, they appear to have been unready for resistance. In their small country every man was a soldier; yet they could bring together only thousands to withstand the Persians' myriads. Unfortunately the small states into which Greece was divided too often fell out with each other, especially Athens and Sparta, the chief rivals for leadership. But now for a time they were willing to stand together against the common enemy.

Sparta had two kings, one of whom, named Leonidas, took upon himself the perilous honour of being foremost to face Xerxes. With an army of a few thousand men, only three hundred of them Spartans, he marched to the north of Greece, where the Persian host, before pouring over the country, must make its way through a narrow road between the mountains and the sea. This pass, known as Thermopylæ ("Hot Gates"), from the warm springs that rise in it, Leonidas volunteered to hold till the rest of Greece should collect an army large enough to resist the invader.

Xerxes could hardly believe that these few thousands meant to stand against his mighty host. He summoned Leonidas to lay down his arms; but the answer was, "Come and take them!" When the Persians had waited for some time, expecting the Greeks to be scared away, they advanced to attack the pass, but were driven back with heavy loss. Their king then sent forward the flower of his army, a band of 10,000, called the "Immortals", who fought bravely, but not so bravely as the Greeks; and the Persians, finding it impossible to force

their way through the pass, might soon have had to turn back had not one Greek played the traitor.

This man, who never again durst show his face among his countrymen, offered to guide the enemy on a narrow mountain path, which would lead them round behind the defenders of the pass. Thus by night the band of Immortals crossed the mountains; and in the morning Leonidas knew how his brave stand was in vain. Most of the army were for abandoning Thermopylæ while retreat was yet open to them, but the heroic king and his three hundred Spartans determined to die at their post, even though all was lost. Seven hundred other Greeks remained with the Spartans; the rest left these to certain death. An oracle, such as was held for the voice of a god, is said to have given out that either Sparta or her king must perish, and Leonidas chose to take this doom upon himself.

The devoted band did not wait to be attacked, but rushed among the Persians, and fought like lions till they fell, one by one, Leonidas among the first. The story goes that a single wounded man escaped to bring the news of their death to Sparta, and that he was shunned as a coward till in another battle he proved his courage. We know only the main facts of this history, one that will never be forgotten. Ever since, Leonidas and his comrades have been famed as men whose duty to their country was stronger than death. Their memory might well be honoured by all Greece; and over their bodies was set up a monument with this inscription: "*Go, stranger, to tell Sparta how we died here, obeying her laws*".

After the death of Leonidas, when the Persians had passed the mountains and came pouring over the valleys

beyond, it seemed as if nothing could stop their conquest. Many of the small peoples in northern Greece submitted to Xerxes. Those of the south withdrew their forces into the Peloponnesus, that part that is almost an island, joined on to the mainland by what we call the Isthmus of Corinth. Across this neck of land they set to building a wall, and hoped to be able to defend themselves here, while Attica, the Athenians' country, which lay north of the isthmus, was left exposed to the invaders.

The Athenian general was Themistocles, who had already persuaded his countrymen to build a large fleet of triremes, war-ships driven by three rows of oars, that in time made Athens the chief naval power of Greece, as Britain is now in Europe. As the Persians drew near, Themistocles reminded the Athenians of an oracle declaring they should find safety in wooden walls, which he interpreted as their ships. Since it seemed hopeless to defend the city against the host of Xerxes, his advice now was that the fighting-men should take to the sea, sending off the women and children to a place of safety in the Peloponnesus, and leaving Athens empty except for a few helpless old folk, and for the dogs that ran howling down to the shore when they saw their masters rowing away. One faithful dog is said to have swum beside its master's ship till it reached land, where the poor beast fell dead of exhaustion.

Opposite the coast of Attica lies the island of Salamis, and in the strait between was gathered the Greek fleet of vessels from several cities. As usual, the leaders fell to quarrelling which should take the command; then Themistocles showed ~~the Athenians~~ ~~the Athenians~~ of mind by giving ~~the Athenians~~ ~~Eurybiades~~ king ~~the Athenians~~ ~~Eurybiades~~ In their angry ~~the Athenians~~ ~~Eurybiades~~ threatened ~~the Athenians~~ ~~Eurybiades~~ the Athenian

with his staff, to which Themistocles gently replied, "Strike, but hear me!" He was for fighting the Persians at Salamis, in sight of Athens, whereas the Spartans and others proposed sailing off to join the army that held the isthmus.

Meanwhile Xerxes had reached Athens, to destroy its defenceless walls and its rich temples; and when the Greeks saw the shore covered with his soldiers, they were all the more inclined to retreat. But now Themistocles, cunning as well as brave, hit on a bold plan for bringing about a battle. Pretending to have turned traitor, he sent a Persian prisoner to warn Xerxes that the Greeks were about to fly for fear of him, so he would do well to attack them at once. The Persian, trusting this advice, ordered his huge fleet to surround the Greek ships, that now had nothing for it but fighting in the strait of Salamis.

The battle went as Themistocles had hoped. To watch it from a mountain looking over the strait, Xerxes sat upon his golden throne, with scribes standing beside him to note down the exploits of his captains. But what he saw was a complete victory of the Athenians. The Persian ships, crowded together in the narrow strait, got in one another's way, and only part of them had room to meet the Greek vessels, so that their own superior number and size proved of no advantage. Themistocles had well chosen his time as well as the place for a naval battle. Knowing this sea, he did not launch out till the morning wind sprang up to raise a heavy swell of waves, on which the light Greek triremes could be managed more easily than the tall, clumsy Persian ships, that, drifting about on the rough water, turned their sides to be rammed by the iron beaks

of the enemy. All day long lasted this famous sea-fight of Salamis; but by nightfall the Persians' ships had been destroyed or turned to flight.

When he saw that mighty fleet thus ruined, the Persian king talked in his fury of filling up the strait with earth that he might march his hundreds of thousands of soldiers across to Salamis. But now again Themistocles practised cunning. He secretly warned Xerxes that the Greeks meant to sail to the Hellespont and break down his bridge of boats. This indeed had been proposed, but what they really decided was to do nothing to hinder the retreat of such an enemy, but rather to help him on his way back to Asia. And indeed Xerxes, believing the message of Themistocles, made haste to march off to the Hellespont with most of his enormous army, which it could not have been easy to feed in such a small country as Greece.

Themistocles now became the hero of all the Greeks, and their praises might well have turned his head. But again he showed true patriotism by persuading them to lay aside their jealousies and stand together for the defence of their common country. Xerxes had left one of his generals with a large force behind him in Europe. Next year the Greeks collected an army from all the states, which, commanded by a Spartan king, entirely defeated the Persians at Platæa. Those three great battles—Marathon, Salamis, and Platæa—are famous for having saved Europe from falling under hosts of Asiatics, whom the Greeks despised as barbarians; while the glorious defeat of Thermopylæ was itself worth a victory, as teaching the Persians with what warriors they had to do. After a time the proud Xerxes, like so many an Eastern despot, was murdered by one of his own officers.

It would have been well for the fame of Themistocles had he died on the field like Leonidas. More than once he had shown how he could lay aside his own ambition to serve under a leader all would acknowledge. But in later life he appears to have been corrupted by less honourable feelings, and even to have turned against his once beloved country. We do not know for certain how he came to fall from his high character for patriotism; but towards the end of his life he was banished from Athens and hunted out of Greece, seeking refuge among the very Persians whom he had done so much to defeat. Yet when the Persian king required him to take part in another expedition against Greece, Themistocles is said to have poisoned himself rather than help to enslave his countrymen.

He did not leave such a noble name as his fellow-citizen Aristides, the “Just”, who had been banished from Athens because his high character seemed a rebuke to the crowd of baser men. It is, however, to the credit of Themistocles that, in the war with Xerxes, he had Aristides recalled from exile, since at such a time every citizen should help to save his country.

### The Athenians

ABOUT B.C. 470-400

After the Persians had been driven away, the Greeks again fell to fighting among themselves. For many years, by fits and starts, went on what was called the Peloponnesian war, in which Athens and Sparta, each backed by confederacies of less powerful states, strove for mastery. Sometimes one side and sometimes the other got the best of it; and both parties grew so hot,

that at times each was for calling in the Persian king to help it against its hostile countrymen.

By its large share in the victories of the Persian war, Athens for a time had seemed likely to become the head of all Greece. Weaker states paid it tribute and homage, till this city grew the richest of all. The money thus coming to Athens, as well as the spoils of the Persian war, could be spent on magnificent and beautiful public buildings, which are still copied all over the world. The most famous of these was the Parthenon, temple of white marble columns crowning the top of the Acropolis, a hill that stood up within the city walls. Its walls, seven or eight miles round, were extended down to the sea-shore, so as to take in the Piræus, the port of Athens, which lay a little way off, as Leith does from Edinburgh, a city resembling Athens in some of its natural features.

What ruined the greatness of the Athenians was their want of steady public spirit. They were always changing their minds about polities, and letting themselves be befooled by ambitious agitators, while their worthiest men often grew so unpopular as to be put to death or driven into exile, or made to pay heavy fines. One of their institutions was called *ostracism*, from a word meaning *shell*, because by it anyone would be banished from Athens if a certain number of voters gave their votes against him by writing his name on a shell. Most of the leaders in the Persian war were at one time or other thus exiled by their ungrateful fellow-citizens.

After the banishment of Themistocles, the chief man at Athens for a time was Cimon, who fought gallantly against the Persians by sea. But he, too, fell into disfavour with this changeable people; and his place as

master of the state passed to Pericles, illustrious not only by his abilities as a general and statesman, but by his love of art and letters. Pericles spent vast sums in adorning the city with those noble temples and sculptures that became the wonder of the world. Not less famous were the artists, poets, and philosophers of Athens, at this period of her highest glory, which is known as the age of Pericles.

But an interval of peace, allowing this ruler so to indulge his taste for magnificence, was followed by the long troubles of the Peloponnesian war. Pericles, in turn, lost his popularity, then he died as the misfortunes of his countrymen were beginning. On his death-bed he is said to have boasted, rather than of all his great works and deeds, how “through him no citizen had ever to put on mourning”, meaning that he had used his power without cruelty.

Pericles left no son; but Alcibiades, a kinsman of his whom he had brought up, seemed likely to succeed to the same influence over the Athenians, had his vices and follies not lost him the respect he might have won by his talents. This celebrated man, indeed, had both good and bad qualities. He was clever, brave, handsome, and eloquent, and his fellow-countrymen were always too ready to be led away by fine words. But he was proud, ambitious, extravagant, reckless, and not to be depended upon; for if sometimes he showed a love of virtue, he oftener gave scandal by his wild conduct. As one example of this mixed character, it is told that he once struck a respectable citizen for a joke, then next morning came to beg his pardon, stripping himself and offering to bear at this man’s hands the chastisement he deserved.

Alcibiades, when quite young, rose to great power,

which he used by stirring up the Athenians to make war so far off as Sicily. But at the height of his popularity the people were turned against him, by some perhaps false or exaggerated reports of what he was said to have done in a fit of drunken madness. These charges were worked up in his absence at the war; and he knew his countrymen too well to trust himself among them to be tried. So, on the way home, he escaped to Sparta, where he was made welcome on account of his renown for bravery; and here he betrayed his native land by stirring up this old enemy against Athens.

Plutarch, who wrote his life, compared Alcibiades to the chameleon, which changes its colour to match its surroundings. For a time this unsteady hero imitated the simplicity of Spartan life, but soon grew tired of plain food and rough manners. He fell out with those new allies and fled again, seeking refuge in Asia Minor with one of the Persian king's viceroys, where he could give himself up to his taste for luxury and pleasure. Wherever he went he seems to have made friends by his taking manners, and to have lost them again when they found him not to be trusted.

After playing a double game, so that no one could be sure which side he was on, Alcibiades openly turned against Sparta. He durst not yet go back to Athens; but he put himself at the head of an Athenian fleet, and won such victories that, when he did come home, the Athenians hailed him as a deliverer. All his offences were now forgotten; he once more stood at the height of popularity, and was made general of the Athenian forces by land and sea.

Had all gone well with him now, he would perhaps have made himself supreme ruler of his native city. But,

when again the Athenians were unfortunate in their war with Sparta, he lost his influence with his fickle countrymen, who appointed other generals to command the army. Alcibiades is said to have given these generals good advice, which they were too proud to take, and let themselves be completely defeated by the Spartan general Lysander. The Spartans then captured Athens, pulled down its walls, burned its ships, took away its conquests and the restless freedom of its citizens, who had to submit to an arbitrary government of thirty tyrants chosen by their enemies.

In vain the unfortunate Athenians repented of having lost Alcibiades as their leader. He had fled once more to Asia Minor, hoping to win the favour of the Persian king and set him on to interfere in Greece. But the Spartans felt that their victory was not sure while this great commander might be plotting against them. Their rulers got a band of men sent to kill him in the Asian village where he lived. It is said that the murderers did not dare to enter his house, but set it on fire, and stood round to kill him with darts and arrows as he rushed out through the flames.

So fell Alcibiades, along with the ruin of Athens. It would have been well if he had listened more to one friend, who in his youth tried to make a better man of him. This was Socrates, the most famous of the Greek philosophers, which means "lovers of wisdom". Socrates did not care to be rich or popular or powerful, but lived simply and quietly, making it his business to teach young men the love of virtue and knowledge, as we learn from the writings of two of his disciples, Plato and Xenophon. By the best of his fellow-citizens he was looked up to with reverence as no common man; and even the dissi-

pated Alcibiades, whose life he had saved in battle, always showed respect for his rebukes. But the mass of the Athenians could not understand the merit of such a man. He was laughed at, slandered, and persecuted; and finally brought to trial on a charge of irreligion, though his real offence was being more pious and thoughtful than his accusers. The judges condemned him to death by drinking poison, which he did calmly and cheerfully, comforting his mournful friends by a declaration of faith that no enemy could kill his soul, and bidding them be glad that he died not guilty but innocent. This happened about 400 years B.C., soon after the capture of Athens had put an end to the Peloponnesian war

### Epaminondas

ABOUT B.C. 370

After the fall of Athens the Spartans had it all their own way in Greece, till the little city of Thebes suddenly rose to take the chief place for a time. This was not the older and greater Egyptian city called Thebes, whose marvellous ruins still stand on the banks of the Nile, to tell how mighty a land Egypt was thousands of years ago. The Greek Thebes was the chief town of Bœotia, a small country lying beside Attica. Neighbours have a way of making fun of one another; and the clever Athenians used to laugh at the Bœotians as stupid and spiritless; yet the time came when they were glad to follow the lead of these neighbours against Sparta.

The great hero of Thebes was Epaminondas, who appears, from all we know of him, one of the noblest characters in ancient history. He was born poor, and his own taste was for learning rather than fighting; but

when his country stood in danger, he showed how he could be a brave and skilful general. He was also celebrated for his love of truthfulness. He seems before his age in despising some of the superstitions that still had power over men's minds. Like barbarous warriors of our own day, the Greeks would refuse to fight under bad omens, that is, when signs given by such accidental circumstances as the flight of birds or the appearance of sacrificed animals were interpreted as promising failure or success. There are relics of such superstition in parts of our own country, where to see one magpie is held unlucky, but two are lucky; while in other places just the opposite will be believed. When Epaminondas, about to begin a battle, was told that the omens were against him, he answered in a verse from Homer: "The best omen is to fight for one's country".

The garrison of Spartans left to enslave Thebes was surprised and killed by a party of Thebans disguised as women, while the Spartan leader sat at a drunken feast. It is told that he had got a letter warning him of the plot, but put it aside unread, saying, "Business tomorrow!" By this time the Spartans appear to have fallen away from the frugal simplicity and temperance that once made them so formidable in war. In a great battle at Leuctra, their army was defeated by the Thebans under Epaminondas and his friend Pelopidas, to whom the rest of Greece now began to look as champions of liberty against that domineering Sparta.

But the Thebans, like the Athenians, were apt to be fickle and jealous of their great men. Epaminondas, accused of having kept the command too long, had his generalship taken away; and the story goes that his enemies got him made the city scavenger; then, with

true greatness of mind, he accepted this post, declaring that if it did not honour him, he would give honour to the meanest office.

For a time Epaminondas remained in disgrace; but when other leaders failed, he was once more put at the head of the army. His comrade Pelopidas being killed, he became known as the greatest general of Greece, from many parts of which soldiers of various states came to join him in throwing off the tyranny of Sparta. Three or four times he invaded the Peloponnesus, the southern half of Greece, and always beat the proud Spartans. At last, in the great victory of Mantinea, he fell pierced by a javelin. His friends bore him away from the field; and though in great pain, all he thought of was how the battle went. "All is well!" he exclaimed, when told that his army had won. The surgeons pronounced that he must die as soon as the javelin was drawn from his painful wound; and when no one else could bear thus to end his sufferings, he wrenches it out with his own hands, happy to die for his native land.

With the death of Epaminondas perished the short-lived glory of Thebes, and indeed the freedom of all Greece. The Grecian cities, instead of taking a lesson from their misfortunes, still kept up their jealousies and quarrels when they should have stood together against enemies from the outside. Thus they fell under the power of Philip, king of Macedon, a country lying to the north, whose people were of the same race as the Greeks. It was in vain that the famous orator Demosthenes sought to unite the Greek states against this ambitious king, who had been brought up at Thebes as a prisoner or hostage in the days of Epaminondas. Philip attacked the cities one by one, till he made himself master of all





STATUE OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

In the Capitoline Museum, Rome

northern Greece. It had been his intention to lead the Greeks against the king of Persia, but he was murdered in the middle of his preparations for this enterprise, which he left to be carried out by his more famous son, Alexander the Great.

### Alexander the Great

B.C. 356-323

This king of Macedon did so much in his short life that it is no wonder if the superstitious people of that time thought him to be descended from a god; then, his own head having been turned by the glory of his exploits, he may well have come to believe that he was of more than human birth. In a dozen years he made himself master of what was then called the world; and the story goes that he wept because there were no more lands left for him to conquer. Of course, in those days men little knew how great the world really was. The chief scene of Alexander's conquests was the southwestern corner of Asia, which had come to be the empire of Persia.

Even as a lad he distinguished himself by his bravery at the battle of Chaeronea, which made his father, King Philip, monarch over Greece. The name Philip, meaning lover of horses, was a common one among the Macedonians, who were excellent riders; and as a boy Alexander had been noted for the courage and skill with which he tamed the wild horse Bucephalus, afterwards renowned as his favourite war-steed. He was carefully taught as well as brave, having for his tutor Aristotle, then the most famous philosopher of Greece, whose books are still studied in our universities.

Alexander was only twenty years old when, at his father's death, he succeeded to the kingdom, in danger from enemies on every side. Having put down rebels in Macedonia, he marched across the Danube against the barbarous tribes to the north; next, turning southwards, he utterly destroyed Thebes, that had tried to shake off his authority. The other Greek states then elected him their leader in a general expedition against Darius, king of Persia, a descendant of that other Darius who, several generations before, had prepared the great invasion of Greece carried out by Xerxes.

With only 30,000 or 40,000 men, Alexander crossed the Hellespont into Asia, where the "great king", as the Persian ruler was entitled by his many subjects, could call out soldiers by hundreds of thousands. The strength of Alexander's army was mainly his Macedonian infantry, who had been drilled to fight in a close body called a *phalanx*, that bore down all before its spears. So it was when he met the much greater Persian forces at the River Granicus, in Mysia, a north-eastern province of Asia Minor. The Asiatics were defeated with great loss; and the conqueror won all the west side of Asia Minor, where Greek colonies and dependencies hailed him as a deliverer from the yoke of Persia.

At the inland town of Gordium, now a poor village, he is said to have found a chariot tied up with a knot of cords, about which there was a legend that whoever unloosed this knot would be master of Asia; and the story goes that when Alexander could not find the secret of the knot, he cut it through with his sword. Another story of this time is that he caught a fever through bathing in a very cold river, then, while lying ill, got a letter of warning that his physician had been bribed

to poison him. But Alexander was too brave himself to be suspicious of others; and when the doctor brought him a draught, he showed him the letter, looking him hard in the face, from which he judged that he could drink the medicine safely, and under this faithful physician's care got over his illness.

When cured of that fever he marched to the edge of Syria, at the north-eastern corner of the Mediterranean. Here he defeated another enormous Persian army at the battle of Issus, taking much rich booty and many prisoners, among them the women of Darius's family, whom he treated kindly, as was by no means the rule in the bloodthirsty wars of old days. Darius himself escaped; but he seemed so completely overthrown that the victor did not follow him at once, turning down the coast of Syria and Palestine towards Egypt, which had made part of the far-spread Persian dominions.

In Egypt he founded, at the mouths of the Nile, the city of Alexandria, that still bears his name. After a year he returned to Asia to seek out Darius, whose pride was so humbled that he offered to give Alexander all the country west of the Euphrates, if he would make peace. But the Greek king pressed on into Persia, once more defeating an army said to be a million strong, and capturing the palace of Darius, who again escaped, only to be killed by one of his own vassals.

Accounts of this conqueror's early life represent him as noble-minded, simple and temperate in his habits, eager for glory rather than pleasure, and well fit to be a leader of men. One story told of him reminds us of a similar one about our own Sir Philip Sidney: how when all the army was distressed by thirst in a sandy desert, a helmet full of water was brought to Alexander, who refused to

drink it when he saw that his soldiers were as thirsty as himself. With such a king at their head, they cried, no want nor weariness could turn them back.

After several years of victories, however, finding himself almost worshipped by the slavish people he overcame, and master of the riches of Persia, Alexander seems to have been spoiled by too much success. In one drunken revel he is said to have set fire to the magnificent palace of Persepolis, the ruins of which still stand in a desert solitude, to show from what greatness Persia has fallen. In another fit of fury he killed his best friend, Clitus; then, sobered by the sight of his dead body, the king is described as trying to kill himself in the bitterness of his repentance. Alexander would not be the only great conqueror who has failed to govern his own hot temper, harder to bridle than any wild Bucephalus.

But he could see how his soldiers were being corrupted by the riches of Persia; and when he set out on farther campaigns, he ordered the wagons loaded with their booty to be burned, his own among the rest. This time he led them into the deserts of Turkestan, and over the snowy passes of the Hindoo Koosh mountains, to come down through what we call Afghanistan upon the plains of India, then almost unknown to the Greeks. Wonderful things they saw there—huge elephants brought to battle against them, and such naked hermits as by the Hindoos are still taken for holy men. Alexander beat a great army led by the Indian king Porus, reported as of gigantic stature, whose courage he so much admired that he gave him back his kingdom after taking him prisoner.

He got no farther into India than the north-western corner called the Punjab, or “Land of Five Rivers”, where he is said to have built a city named after his

horse Bucephalus, that died here. Alexander himself was for pushing on to the Ganges and the other side of India; but his Greeks, having had enough of hard fighting in this strange country, refused to go farther. He took them back through the hot deserts of Beloochistan, where they met perils worse than war, for the greater part of the army is said to have perished of hunger and thirst in this wilderness.

Having reached Persia, Alexander set about making one people of his many subjects in Greece and Asia. To this end he gave his soldiers Persian wives, and himself married a daughter of Darius. He had now been more than ten years away from Macedon, yet he showed no haste to return to his native land. From the highlands of Persia he marched down into the plains about the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, intending here to restore the great city of Babylon as capital of his empire. But again he fell ill of fever, probably made worse by the bad habit he had fallen into of drinking too much wine; and he died at the height of his glory, when only thirty-two years old.

After Alexander's death, the huge empire he had conquered soon went to pieces. It was divided among his chief generals, some of whom fell to fighting with one another, and most of them could not keep the foreign kingdoms they had won by the sword. In a few generations more Greece itself was conquered by the Romans, who meanwhile had been slowly growing up to become for long the masters of the world.

## The Romans

B.C. 750-320

While Greece was torn by wars and feuds, much the same had been going on in Italy, with this difference, that here one city rose to dominate over the rest and in time to spread its power all round the Mediterranean. This was Rome, on the Tiber, which began, like Athens and Sparta, as a small state, fighting with its neighbours, now beating them, then in turn being beaten, but in the end swallowing them all up in its own name and fame. Before the Romans the chief nation in Italy seems to have been the Etruscans, inhabitants of the modern Tuscany; but they flourished so long ago that almost nothing is known of them.

We know little for certain, indeed, of the early days of Rome, as to which are told some marvellous stories, that may be more or less true, like the legends of Arthur or of Fingal in our own history. The race of Romans is fabled by the poets to have landed in Italy as fugitives from Troy. Rome was believed to have been founded by two brothers, Romulus and Remus, who quarrelled over the building of it, and Romulus, killing his brother, became the first king. The names of several kings are given as having ruled well or ill after Romulus; but what is told of them often reads more like a fairy tale than true history.

About five centuries before Christ, it is said, the king of Rome was Tarquin the Proud, who ruled so tyrannously that the Romans turned him out and resolved to have no more kings. Their government was in future to be a republic, headed by two consuls of equal power, who should be elected every year like our mayors. One

of the first consuls was Brutus, who had escaped falling a victim to the tyrant only through pretending to be out of his wits. Of him it is told that when some of the young men made a plot to bring back Tarquin, and among the conspirators were found two sons of Brutus, that stern father ordered them to be put to death as an example. More than once in old Rome's story we hear of a consul condemning his own son to execution for disobedience.

During their term of office the consuls divided all the power of a king, each of them being attended by a band of *lictors* bearing axes done up in a bundle of rods for beheading or scourging offenders. Great power, as in other ancient republics, was held by the Senate, that is the council of old and worthy citizens, "fathers of the state" as they were entitled, either chosen to this rank or holding it after they had served as generals or magistrates. These were the nobles of Rome. Another class of whom much is heard in the Roman history was the Knights, well-to-do citizens who could go out to war on horseback, and made what may be called the gentry of the nation. Then for long there was a strongly-marked distinction kept up between the real Romans and men of other states, whom they took in as allies or dependants, but looked upon as holding an inferior position, as we think of our Asiatic subjects.

The Tarquin family made several attempts to win back their kingship, and once had almost succeeded through the help of Lars Porsena, a powerful Etruscan prince. Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* have made us all familiar with the story of Horatius Cocles, who, when the Etruscans were about to pour into the city, with two brave comrades defended the bridge across the

Tiber against a whole army, until the Romans had broken down the bridge behind him; then he sprang into the river and swam safe to shore. Another hero of the wars with Tarquin was Mucius Scævola, that is "left handed", who got this honourable nickname by his fortitude. When the Etruscans had laid siege to Rome to starve it into submission, he went into the camp to kill their king, Porsena. On being captured, to show the king how little he minded whatever might be his punishment, he held his right hand in a fire till it was burned away, at the same time telling him that he was only one of three hundred youths who had all taken the same oath to kill the enemy of their people. Porsena is said to have been so astonished by such courage that he let Mucius go free and made peace with the Romans. All the Tarquins got by their attempts to conquer Rome was to leave there an abiding hatred for the very name of king.

The republican government of Rome, however, was rather a clumsy machine, which did not always work well. The two consuls, who were supposed to be a check upon each other's becoming all-powerful, sometimes would disagree about what was best to be done; and, as the city grew greater, their authority became complicated with that of other magistrates called by such titles as *censor*, *prætor*, *questor*, and so forth. Then, besides the dignified Senate, the people met together in large noisy assemblies to vote upon matters of public interest; and these meetings did not always agree with the magistrates on questions which a mob could hardly understand.

When an enemy was at their gates, or some other urgent peril gave no time for talking and voting, the

Romans were often at a loss for someone to take the lead with unquestioned authority, without which an army cannot be commanded. In such emergencies, then, they used to elect a *dictator*, who for six months, or till the peril should be past, was to be absolute master of his fellow-citizens. Such a leader was Cincinnatus, so highly trusted that he was taken from his plough to be dictator and head of the defeated Roman army, which he led back to victory, and so justified the confidence of his countrymen.

The Romans loved stories representing their great men of old as having been plain farmers, working with their own hands. But it appears that in very early days there were fierce quarrels at Rome between rich and poor, known as Patricians and Plebeians. The Patricians had got the authority into their own hands, and also the lands conquered from other states about them. More than once the Plebeians rose in rebellion to claim equality, and talked of leaving Rome to start a new city elsewhere. At last their disputes came to be partially appeased by Agrarian Laws, as they were called, for the dividing of the land more fairly, and by the election of magistrates entitled Tribunes of the People, who were to stand up for the rights of the poor. These tribunes in time gained such power that they could stop the passing of any law by saying the one word *veto*, "I forbid".

Also the Romans were now and then in danger of falling back under the power of tyrants, as happened to them in the end. At one time they appointed a body of ten men, called the *Decemvirs*, to draw up a code of laws for them, after the model of those given by Solon to Athens. The Decemvirs, finding themselves

in power, were in no haste to lay down their office; and one of them, named Appius Claudius, took upon himself to rule the city so cruelly and oppressively as at last to stir up a revolt. The story goes that he gave a false judgment of slavery against Virginia, a young girl whom he wished to get under his mastership. Her father, Virginius, an officer in the army, seeing the girl undone without hope of justice, asked leave to speak one last word to her, then, snatching up a butcher's knife that lay at hand, stabbed her to the heart as the only way of securing her freedom. With the blood-stained knife in his hand, he rushed to the camp outside the city and roused his comrades to overthrow the power of the Decemvirs.

While thus wrangling among themselves at times, the Romans went on fighting with their neighbours, conquering and making alliances, by which they took in other towns and tribes to enlarge their country. A little later than the time of Alcibiades and Socrates, the cities of Italy were attacked by an enemy from outside, the wild Gauls from the north, who more than once came nearly to ruin Rome. This time they defeated the Romans so terribly that the people did not attempt to defend their city. The story of the Gauls entering Rome is such a striking one, that we should like it to be true. They are said to have marched through the silent and deserted streets, till in the Forum, or public square, they found the white-bearded senators sitting all in a row, motionless as images. The rough Gauls gazed on them with awe, taking these for no mortal men; but when one ventured to stroke a senator's beard, and the old man hit him with his ivory staff, the barbarian struck back with his sword; and thus began a massacre in which

all the defenceless senators were slain, the city being plundered and burned.

Many of the Romans had taken refuge in the Capitol, as they called the rocky citadel in the middle of Rome; and here they held out for a long time, the Gauls being unable to storm this fortress. One night they had almost taken it by surprise, stealing up the rocks unnoticed both by the sentinels and the dogs; but some geese were more wide awake, and their cackling aroused the garrison. These geese seem to have been kept as sacred birds, then henceforth they would be looked on as more sacred than ever.

At last, being almost starved out, the Romans agreed to pay a large amount of gold as ransom, for which the Gauls were to leave them in peace. The story is, that when the gold was being weighed, Brennus, the Gaulish chief, threw his sword also into the scale, exclaiming, "Woe to the vanquished!" But just at this time came up Camillus, a brave Roman general, who had been banished by his ungrateful countrymen, but whom they had now recalled as dictator. He ordered the gold to be taken away, declaring that Rome's safety should be bought rather by iron, that is, by arms. Then, with him for leader, the insolent Gauls were now attacked and driven off; yet again and again they came back to plunder the cities of Italy.

Of Rome's enemies nearer home, the most formidable was the people called the Samnites, who lived in the mountains of central Italy, and, like most highlanders, made brave and hardy soldiers. With them the Romans had three notable wars, one of which lasted for more than twenty years. The chief leader of the Samnites was Pontius, who at one time took the Roman army

prisoners in a mountain pass called the Caudine Forks, and inflicted on them the disgrace of "passing under the yoke", that is, man by man, stripped almost naked, they had to stoop beneath spears set up like a football goal. Such a painful humiliation, as it was counted in these wars, so exasperated the Romans, that they fought battle after battle, till about B.C. 300 the Samnites gave in. But when other Italian peoples tried to shake off the power of Rome, Pontius again led the Samnites to war, to be at last defeated and carried in triumph to Rome, where he was put to death, as he did not deserve, after having spared the lives of a whole Roman army.

Had Pontius been a hero of Rome we might know more about his exploits. But the Romans, so proud to remember their own great men of old, had not much to say in praise of their enemies. We read of these early times only in books written afterwards by Roman writers, whose main concern was to flatter their fellow-countrymen with a fine story. All their history is at the best dim and doubtful, till about the time of Alexander's empire going to pieces, when Rome stands out as having clearly become the chief power in Italy.

### Pyrrhus

B.C. 318-272

The Greeks, as we saw, spread far beyond their own small country; and in the south of Italy they had so many colonies that this was called *Magna Græcia* (Great Greece). Here several Greek cities, now decayed or almost forgotten, grew to be flourishing seaports, whose rich and luxurious inhabitants had got out of the way of fighting. As the Romans went on conquering the

warlike peoples around them, those Greek cities might well fear for their own independence; and one of them, Tarentum, on what is still called from its modern name the Gulf of Taranto, sent for help to Pyrrhus, king of Epirus.

Pyrrhus, born not long after Alexander's death, in several ways resembled that great conqueror. He also was king of a small country lying beside Macedonia, on the north of Greece. He came into his kingdom very young, and spent almost all his life in war. Like Alexander, too, he had the ambition of conquering all other kingdoms. So when the people of Tarentum called on him to be their champion against Rome, he willingly came over to Italy with an army of more than 20,000 men, and with some twenty elephants, as formidable to soldiers who had never seen such monsters, as our big guns are to naked savages.

Pyrrhus expected to have an easy victory over these barbarians, as he called the Romans; but he soon found out his mistake. In his first battle he beat them, indeed, but only when his monstrous elephants came forward to scare both horses and men in the Roman army. So many of his own men were killed, that he exclaimed, "Another such victory, and I must go back to Greece alone!" — from which comes the proverbial phrase "a Pyrrhic victory" for one of doubtful advantage. And when he saw the Roman dead with all their wounds in front, he is said to have declared that with soldiers so brave as these under him he could conquer the world.

So much respect did he feel for such a foe, that the king was ready to make peace; and it was the proud Romans who refused his offers even when Pyrrhus was within a day's march of their city. All they would do

was to send him an ambassador called Fabricius, to treat for an exchange of prisoners. Pyrrhus tried first to bribe Fabricius with large sums of gold, then to frighten him by setting an elephant to wave its trunk over his head; and when he found the Roman unmoved by either fear or covetousness, he sought in vain to win him over to his own service. The firmness of Fabricius increased the king's respect for a people whom he would rather have as friends than foes.

Next year he again took the field, and again beat the Romans, but lost so many of the Greeks who were the strength of his army, that he durst not risk any more such battles. Soon afterwards he found a good excuse for making peace. A servant of his own fled to Rome, where he offered to poison his master. But the Roman consuls sent him back as a prisoner, letting the king know that they scorned to get rid of an enemy by such base means. Pyrrhus, not to be behindhand in generosity, set all his prisoners free without ransom; and this so pleased the Romans that they agreed to a truce.

Pyrrhus now crossed over into Sicily, where the Greek towns were threatened by the Carthaginians, an African people, of whom more has to be said presently. He won some battles, but found the Sicilians so ungrateful for his services, and so ready to plot against him, that after two years he came back to Tarentum and resumed his war with the Romans.

But now he had lost most of the brave soldiers he brought from Greece, and his army was chiefly made up of hired mercenaries, who were not men of the same stamp. His terrible elephants, too, were fewer, and in the next battle the Romans killed or captured most of them. So he was now utterly defeated, and had to sail

away to Epirus with only a few survivors of his once powerful army. Not long afterwards, in attacking a small Greek town, he is said to have met his end ingloriously, killed by a tile which a woman threw at him from a house top.

When Pyrrhus no longer stood in their way, the Romans conquered all the Greek cities of the south. In the north, also, they soon came to push their conquests towards the Alps, and to drive back the tribes of Gauls that more than once had assailed them in their own country. But first, in Sicily, which lay like a football between the warriors of Africa and Italy, they came into perilous collision with Carthage, now their great rival on the Mediterranean.

### Regulus

ABOUT B.C. 250-200

When Rome began to be the strongest fighting nation on land, the chief sea power in the world was Carthage, whose territory had much the same bounds as the African state now called Tunis. It had originally been a colony from Phoenicia, whence came the most enterprising sailors of early history; and romantic legends are told of its foundation, and of its ancient queen, Dido. The Roman tongue altered the Phoenicians' name into *Pœni* or *Puni*; thus the long struggle between Rome and Carthage, that went on at intervals for more than a century, is known as the Punic wars.

The first Punic war began in Sicily, of which Pyrrhus rightly said that he left it as a battle-field between Rome and Carthage. The Romans soon got the best of it on land; but the Carthaginians had the advantage

of their many ships, making them masters of the sea. So Rome for the first time built a large fleet of war-vessels, which defeated the enemy at sea and made it possible to land a Roman army in Africa.

The hero of this war was the Consul Regulus, who defeated the Carthaginians on their own soil, and came so close to their capital that they sued for peace. But the fortune of war became changed by the arrival of Greek troops to the help of Carthage. One of these strangers, the Spartan Xanthippus, took command of the army, which numbered a hundred elephants; and by him the Romans were in turn beaten with great loss, Regulus being made prisoner. The Roman fleet, too, was more than once wrecked by storms; so for a time it seemed as if Carthage would triumph.

But when in Sicily the Romans won another great victory, the Carthaginians sent an embassy to Rome, and with it their prisoner Regulus, released on condition of his returning to Carthage if his countrymen would not make peace. Then Regulus behaved with the noble unselfishness that has celebrated his name in history. He was foremost in urging the Senate to continue the war, though this meant death for himself. In vain his friends tried to keep him at Rome; in vain, it is said, his wife and children hung about his neck, begging him not to leave them. He refused to break his promise, and went back to give himself up a prisoner at Carthage, choosing honour rather than safety. There the enemy, disappointed in their hopes of peace, killed him with horrible tortures, as cruelly revenged by the Romans upon two of their chief Carthaginian prisoners.

It was men of this temper that made Rome so mighty, men who were indeed harsh and often cruel to their



Photo. Alinari

THE DEPARTURE OF REGULUS

From the fresco by Prof. Maccari in the Palace of the Senate, Rome



enemies, but who set the welfare of their country above their own. Regulus is said to have been a plain farmer, of simple ways, and still a poor man when placed at the head of an army. It may be that the tale of his patriotic devotion came to be exaggerated; but his countrymen put it among their proudest records, honouring the memory of Regulus as one of those old Romans who—

“ In Rome’s quarrel,  
Spared neither land nor gold,  
Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,  
In the brave days of old ”.

The war went on for years yet, till the Carthaginians were the first to grow weary of it, and they gave up Sicily to Rome, besides paying a large sum of money as the price of peace. Then little more than twenty years passed before the breaking out of the second and greater struggle between Rome and Carthage.

### Hannibal

B.C. 247-183

One of the chief Carthaginian generals was Hamilcar, father of the more celebrated Hannibal. Hamilcar felt bitterly the defeat of his country; and when his son was only nine years old, the father is said to have made him swear a solemn oath of eternal hatred against Rome—a vow he never forgot.

To make up for the loss of Sicily, Hamilcar undertook to conquer Spain for Carthage, and there, as a boy, Hannibal was brought up to war. When still a young man, after his father’s death, he became leader of the Carthaginian army in Spain; then before long he had so far

mastered this barbarous country, that from it he could prepare to invade Italy on the north side. Thus began the second Punic war, to last for the life of half a generation, most of which time this great general spent in the enemy's country, only once again setting foot on his own native land.

With an army of more than 100,000 men, in B.C. 218, Hannibal set out for Rome by a roundabout road, that seemed safer than the direct way between the sea and the mountains. He first crossed the Pyrenees into what is now France, where he made friends and allies among the Gaulish tribes living there. Turning then towards Italy, he had next to pass the snowy Alps; and the leading of an army over those mountains seemed so difficult a task that a legend ran of his softening the rocks by vinegar poured over them. Here he had to fight his way against savage mountaineers, who attacked him in the narrow passes. Then many of his troops were Africans, accustomed to a hot climate, who could not stand the Alpine cold. Others were Gauls, or Iberians of Spain, pressed into the service, who took any chance to desert. When at last he came down into the plains of North Italy, more than two-thirds of his great army had melted away, and most of the elephants had died on which he counted to trample down the Roman horsemen.

In spite of such losses, he defeated the Romans in two battles, and pressed on into the middle of Italy, where again he won the great battle of Lake Trasimenus. The renown of these victories brought him reinforcements from the Gauls, and from unwilling allies or dependants of Rome, on whose rebellion he had reckoned when he threw himself so boldly into an enemy's country. The Romans began to see the need of caution

in opposing such a foe. They placed their army under Fabius Maximus, nicknamed the "Delayer", because, instead of meeting the Carthaginians in open fight, he hung about their march on the hills, where they could not attack him, only now and then coming down to annoy them when he could do so with safety, as they advanced into the south of Italy. In this way, Fabius said, he would let Hannibal's army burn itself out; while Hannibal spoke of Fabius as a cloud upon the mountains ready to burst upon him in hail and wind.

That cautious policy seemed best for wearing out, in the end, an enemy cut off from his source of supplies and reinforcements, and with no strong fortress to fall back on. But the Roman people, growing impatient of slow and sure tactics, listened to generals who were for carrying on the war in a more dashing style. An army of nearly a hundred thousand men marched across Italy to attack Hannibal at Cannæ on the east coast. Here, B.C. 216, they were terribly defeated, half of them being slain. The slaughter in those ancient battles, where men fought hand to hand with sword and spear, was much greater in proportion than now, when armies use far more deadly weapons, but have for that reason to be less rash in coming to a close encounter.

The battle of Cannæ seemed to be the ruin of Rome; and if Hannibal had hurried on, it is believed that he might have taken the city. But he turned to the south of Italy, stirring up the people there to revolt against the Romans; and he now made his head-quarters at the city of Capua, not far from Mt. Vesuvius, which had received him as a deliverer. This was then the second city of Italy, so rich that the Carthaginian soldiers are believed to have lost part of their hardy boldness in the

luxurious life they led at Capua. The Romans, recovering from their disaster, put Fabius Maximus back in command, who again carried out his plan of avoiding a battle, but watching and checking the enemy as he marched up and down through Italy. His fellow-consul was Marcellus, a more daring general, called the sword of Rome, as Fabius its shield. The great exploit of Marcellus was capturing Syracuse in Sicily, when this city took the side of the Carthaginians, and made a long defence by help of the famous inventor Archimedes, who is said to have used huge burning-glasses to set the Roman ships on fire.

For several years Hannibal kept himself unbeaten, won other victories, and once appeared before the gates of Rome; but all his generalship was wasted on the stubborn temper of the Romans. They had the advantage of being at home, able to raise more soldiers from the centre of Italy, where most of their vassals stood faithful to them; and even when they avoided meeting Hannibal in battle, they could send armies into Sicily and Spain to assail his allies there. He was ill-backed by the rulers of Carthage, and must have had great difficulty in feeding and paying the soldiers he could keep together, while, as in the case of Pyrrhus, the well-trained veterans he had led into Italy were by this time mostly killed in his many battles. So the tide of fortune began to turn. From Spain, Hannibal's brother Hasdrubal set out to join him with an army that might have given him fresh strength. But after crossing the Alps Hasdrubal was slain in a decisive battle; and his head, thrown into Hannibal's camp, told the great general how ten years of victories had all gone in vain.

Now Rome could change the cautious generalship of

Fabius for bolder attacks on its enemy. Hannibal drew back into the wild mountains at the foot of Italy, where for four years more he stood on his defence. Instead of attacking him here, the Romans sent an army into Africa under Scipio, who showed himself one of their greatest generals, and for his exploits in this war received the surname of Africanus. As in the former Punic war, rebellious subjects of Carthage joined the invaders; and the Carthaginians were so hard pressed that they called Hannibal back from Italy, where he had now been for fifteen years. He came with the remains of his army; but at the battle of Zama, B.C. 202, he was utterly defeated by Scipio. Hannibal himself saw that all was lost, and advised his countrymen to make peace, as they had to do on most humiliating terms.

Scipio came back to enter Rome in triumph, the chief figure in a stately procession of soldiers and prisoners, which was the highest honour that could be given to a Roman general. For long he was the idol of his fellow-citizens, whom he had rid of such a formidable enemy. Far different was the fate of Hannibal, treated with ingratitude and jealousy by the Carthaginians for whom he had fought so well. He had to fly from Carthage, taking refuge first with one king of Asia, then with another. But the now all-powerful Romans did not feel secure so long as their old enemy lived. They hunted him out in Asia, demanding that he should be given up by the king under whose protection he was living; and rather than fall into their hands as a prisoner, the heart-broken hero killed himself by poison.

## The Fall of Carthage

B.C. 146

Carthage being thus humbled, Rome stood up as the greatest power in the world. Already she had been pushing her power into Greece, where soon none of the weakened and disunited states could resist her commands; then from Greece her armies went on to invade Syria and Asia Minor. In Europe she victoriously attacked the Gauls, and conquered the Spanish tribes who had been first subdued by Carthage. On all sides, across seas and mountains, the lands of barbarous tribes and of rich kings began to be made into Roman provinces, governed by pro-consuls sent from Rome, who held large populations in subjection by their legions.

*Legion* was the name given to the chief divisions of the Roman army, each containing several thousand men, both horse and foot, farther divided into cohorts and centuries, answering to our battalions and companies. At first a great point was made of the best soldiers being Romans, their vassals and allies forming separate bodies; but as Rome went on conquering foreign countries she recruited her legions from all parts of the world. The privileges of Roman citizenship, too, were extended in time to foreigners, so that St. Paul, born in Asia Minor, is found proud to call himself a Roman.

Such conquests made a great difference to this city of soldiers. The Greeks were a richer and more civilized people; and the plunder of their cities gave the Romans a new taste for luxury and pleasure. Pictures, statues, and books, as well as money, were brought to Rome, where grew up a class of wealthy and idle nobles, who

would no longer work on the land like their simple fore-fathers, but kept great households of slaves taken in the foreign wars. Many of these slaves were artists and scholars, who taught their masters the arts and learning that now became fashionable in Rome as in Athens. It was said of Greece that it had conquered its conquerors by changing their ways of life.

Against such changes one Roman stood out obstinately, Cato the Censor, as he was called, after he came to hold the high office of the censorship, that gave him a right to find fault with all other magistrates. He was never tired of praising the good old days, as he thought them, when a Roman could handle the sword and the plough better than the pen. Though a hard master and a bitter enemy, he gave an example of virtue and justice in his public life, so that his fellow-citizens could not but respect him, although he sternly denounced their new manners, that were indeed to ruin the Roman republic. Yet even Cato was so far carried away by the movement of the time, that in his old age he learned Greek, which began to be the language of educated men all about the Mediterranean, as Latin afterwards was among the half-civilized nations of Europe.

Another point on which Cato used all his eloquence was the utter destruction of Carthage. This notion so filled his mind, that at last he never made a speech without ending "Carthage must be destroyed!" He is said to have thrown down before the senators a bunch of fresh figs, exclaiming, "These were gathered but three days ago at Carthage, so near is the enemy to Rome!" In time, by continual harping on this subject, he won over the Romans to his hatred of their old enemy.

Carthage was indeed growing again, and, half a century

after the second Punic war, had recovered much of her commercial prosperity. When Rome threatened them with war, the poor Carthaginians at first agreed to give up their arms in hope of being left alone. But as they found the Romans would be satisfied with nothing less than their destruction, they defended themselves with the courage of despair, the women, it is said, cutting off their long hair to be spun into bow-strings. For a time they kept the invaders at bay, till there came to Africa as Roman general another Scipio, Africanus Minor as he was called, to distinguish him from the elder hero of the same family. He took Carthage (B.C. 146) in a fight that lasted for nearly a week, filling the streets with such scenes of ruin and bloodshed that Scipio himself wept at the sight, thinking how the same fate might one day fall on Rome.

The once mighty city of Carthage was swept from the earth, not one stone of it being allowed to stand. The country became a Roman province under the name of Africa, which by and by spread over the whole continent. As capital of the Roman province was built a new Carthage, that later on again became large and famous; but of this too only a few ruins can now be seen, not far from the modern city of Tunis.

### The Gracchi

ABOUT B.C. 130-120

The Romans had listened to Cato as to rooting out Carthage, but they would not mind his warnings against the evils that grew stronger among themselves. They grew to be less barbarous, but at the same time less virtuous. The rich became richer and the poor poorer. The

chief men, instead of thinking first of the glory and greatness of the state, sought power and profit for themselves. Even while it went on conquering all round the Mediterranean, the republic was split into parties whose quarrels would drown its freedom in blood.

The great trouble, as of old, was the ever-renewed conflict between the patricians, that is, nobles and gentry, and the mass of the people. The riches and lands won in foreign wars came chiefly into the hands of the wealthy and powerful, who, by the labour of slaves, kept free men out of work. Against this oppression a brave stand was made by the two brothers Gracchus, who, though themselves belonging to the nobility, heartily took the side of the common people.

Tiberius and Caius Gracchus were sons of Cornelia, daughter of the famous general, Scipio Africanus; and their father rose to be consul. Cornelia had them carefully taught, and was so proud of them that, when other Roman ladies were boastfully showing her their rich ornaments, she is said to have brought in her sons, come home from school, declaring, "These are my jewels!" The two brothers grew up good scholars and soldiers, and true patriots, for the misery of the poor moved them to oppose their own friends and equals, whose selfishness seemed the cause of so much poverty.

Tiberius, after serving as a soldier in the last war with Carthage, got himself made Tribune of the People, B.C. 133, that he might propose the re-enactment of an old law, by which no citizen was allowed to own more than a fair share of land, such as could be cultivated by himself and his family. Some of the best of the nobles backed him up, though the law was against their own interests, and it was carried. The rich senators were

so angry against the popular champion that, after trying to slander him by the charge of aiming to make himself king, they raised a riot in which Tiberius was killed.

His brother Caius, a few years younger, then took up the popular cause, and, besides standing out for a fair division of the land, proposed that the conquered Italian peoples should now be given the privileges of Roman citizens, as was done in the end; but as yet the Romans, both rich and poor, were not inclined to treat their subjects with such generosity. This troublesome reformer the Senate got rid of, for a time, by sending him away to serve with the army, a duty no Roman noble could refuse. But he came back to be elected Tribune of the People, like his brother; and in this office did his best to bring about reforms, and to have just judges chosen, when the courts were corrupted by bribery. Had he been allowed to go on in his useful efforts, he might have checked the evils that were destroying the republic.

But his opponents hit upon a trick for taking away his popularity. They set up one of their own party to outbid him in fine promises to the people; and this was so successful that the fickle voters did not re-elect Caius Gracchus to the tribuneship. The Romans, like most ignorant democracies, seldom were true to their own best friends. When Gracchus became no longer so popular, the senators ventured to use force against him. A tumult arose that gave them an excuse for attacking the popular party, and 3000 men are said to have been killed in the streets. Gracchus tried to escape, but was overtaken, and had himself stabbed by a faithful slave rather than fall into the hands of his bitter enemies. They are said to have paid for his head its weight in gold; which it was well worth to them, as,

after his death, the corrupt nobility got back their ill-used power, and all the reforms started by these brothers were undone. Many years later, when the patricians' hatred to them had died out, statues of the two Gracchi were set up in Rome; and they came to be honoured among the best sons of their country.

### Cæsar

B.C. 100-44

For the next century the history of Rome is one of almost continual war both abroad and at home. Rich and poor had fierce quarrels, which came to murdering and to fighting in the streets of the city, even while the Roman armies went on conquering foreign nations. Several times the slaves rose against their masters in what was called a Servile war. Many of the Italian vassals tried to revolt against the Romans. Successful generals led their armies to support one or other party at Rome, where, becoming masters for a time, they exiled or slew their opponents. The most celebrated of these military tyrants were Marius and Sulla, the former a champion of the popular party, while the latter tried to restore the power of the nobles. Such sanguinary civil wars would make so long and confused a story, that it must be enough to tell how at the end of them this troubled republic lost all but the name of freedom under the despotism of Cæsar.

Caius Julius Cæsar, born just a century before our era, was the greatest man of ancient Rome, as at once orator, scholar, statesman, and general, though not till well on in life did he get the chance of distinguishing himself in war. Two other Romans were his rivals for power,

Pompey, a distinguished soldier, and Cicero, the famous writer and orator, a well-meaning but not very stout-hearted patriot. By his victories in Asia, pushed as far as Armenia, Pompey had gained so much glory and popularity, that Cæsar saw the need of earning the same kind of renown before he could carry out his deep design to make himself the chief man at Rome.

He undertook, then, the conquest of Gaul beyond the Alps—the modern France, Belgium, and Switzerland. This took him several years, during which he also crossed the Rhine to invade Germany, and the Channel to attack what was then the barbarous race of Britons. He did not stay long in Britain, but on the mainland he turned Gaul into a submissive Roman province. Of these celebrated campaigns Cæsar himself has written an excellent account, well known to us as a Latin school-book.

While conquering in the name of Rome, he had been training a brave and devoted army, ready to follow him anywhere, since he always led them to victory. The Senate, suspecting his designs, ordered him not to bring this army into Italy; but Cæsar disobeyed them by crossing the Rubicon, a small river looked on as the Italian frontier: hence “to cross the Rubicon” came to be a phrase for the beginning of any daring enterprise from which there can be no turning back. He marched on to Rome, no one being able to resist his forces. Pompey fled to Greece, and there raised an army; but Cæsar followed and defeated him at the battle of Pharsalia (B.C. 48); then soon afterwards Pompey was murdered in Egypt.

Cæsar, having now no rival for power at home, made war on rebellious vassals of Rome in Asia, from which he sent to the Senate his famous laconic despatch *veni, vidi, vici*.

*vidi, vici* ("I came, I saw, I conquered"). He next passed over into Africa, where Scipio and Cato, descendants of the former worthies of that name, still held out for republican freedom. But they too were beaten, and Cato, unwilling to survive the defeat of his party, killed himself, the "last of the old Romans", as he has been called.

Coming back to Rome, Cæsar now ruled as absolute master. He would have liked to style himself king, but the Romans still cherished such a hatred for this title, that he had to be content with being a king in fact if not in name. He took the old title of Dictator, and another that, if not new, began then to have a new meaning, *Imperator*, or commander of the army, which came to be our "Emperor". By this time, indeed, it was the favour of the soldiery, rather than the choice of the electors, that put any man in power at Rome.

If Cæsar had been unscrupulous in his plans for gaining power, it must be said that he seems to have used it well. He did his best to bring the angry factions of Rome to order, showing no desire to punish his enemies, as had been the rule with other tyrants who for a time got the upper hand. He reformed the law, and had great designs for the welfare of the state, which he hoped to make prosperous and peaceful under a strong government.

But his rule did not last long. A number of envious or discontented men made a conspiracy to murder him, the leaders being his enemy, Cassius, and one whom he looked on as a friend, Brutus, a descendant of that old Brutus who drove out the kings. Cæsar is said to have been warned of his danger, but he was too proud and generous for suspicion. On the Ides of March, as the

Romans called the middle of a month (B.C. 44), the conspirators stabbed him to death in the Senate-house; and he fell at the foot of his old foe Pompey's statue, his last words being, with a reproachful look at that false friend, "And you, too, Brutus!"

Among Cæsar's institutions was one of which we still feel the benefit. He first divided the year into our months and days, according to the Calendar, or measure of time, still used in civilized countries, its name coming from *calends*, the Roman term for the beginning of a month. But because of an error of a few minutes then made in calculating the length of the year, in the course of sixteen centuries our time had gained ten days or so on the sun; so the Pope of that date, Gregory, undertook to set the Calendar right by dropping out these ten days from the year. This change to the Gregorian Calendar was not made in Britain till 1752; and in Russia the old Calendar is still kept, making a difference by this time of nearly twelve days. July takes its name from Cæsar's middle or family name, *Julius*, given to this month because in it was his birthday.

### Augustus

B.C. 63 – A.D. 14

After the death of Cæsar all was confusion at Rome. The conspirators hoped to be hailed as deliverers, but soon saw that the people were not with them. At Cæsar's funeral, indeed, the popular rage against Brutus and Cassius rose so high that they and their friends made haste to fly from Rome. Cæsar's power now fell into the hands of his friend, Mark Anthony, who had eloquently stirred up the mob against the assassins. But the great man's will named as his heir his grand-nephew

and adopted son, Octavianus, afterwards better known as Augustus Cæsar. Octavianus was only a lad, studying at Athens, when he heard the news; then he at once set out for Italy, and was received as their leader by the late imperator's troops.

It seemed as if Anthony and Octavianus would come to blows for supremacy; but they now agreed to divide the government between them, taking a third partner, Lepidus, into what was known as a Triumvirate, or rule of three men. These three ruled most cruelly, putting to death many of their opponents, among them the worthy Cicero, who had offended Anthony. But though they agreed for the moment, the falling out of the tyrants would be only a matter of time; and Octavianus, young as he was, proved the most cunning and masterful of the three.

They had soon to deal with Cæsar's murderers, who, having escaped into Greece, held all the eastern part of the Roman dominions. This party was crushed at the great battle of Philippi (B.C. 42), after which Brutus and Cassius both killed themselves in despair. The Triumvirs then divided the empire between them, Anthony taking the eastern provinces, Octavianus the western, and Africa falling to the share of Lepidus. This last soon retired into private life; and the struggle for power lay between the other two.

While Octavianus behaved himself prudently, so as to win the confidence of the Romans, Anthony played the fool in the East, losing all his manliness and sense in the dissolute life of an oriental despot. He became infatuated by the charms of Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, for whose love he deserted his wife, the sister of Octavianus; and this helped to break the last pretence of

friendship between the two rulers. Octavianus declared war against Anthony and Cleopatra, who assembled their fleet and army at Actium, a promontory on the west coast of Greece. But Anthony was no longer the brave and skilful general he had shown himself in his early life, and here (B.C. 31) he came to be beaten in a great sea-fight. With Cleopatra he fled to Egypt, then, to escape falling into the hands of the victor, both of them committed suicide, which, among the Romans, was a favourite way of having done with troubles.

Octavianus now became master not only of Rome but of the world. Cautiously selfish as he was, he took care not to offend the Romans by any pretensions that would remind them how they had lost their boasted liberty. He kept up all the old forms of republican government; and for hundreds of years yet consuls and other magistrates continued to be appointed, when they had ceased to be anything but servants of the all-powerful emperor. The Romans gave the surname of *Augustus*, "the venerable", to a prince whom they even worshipped as a god, temples being dedicated to him. Thus arose the Roman Empire, whose successive rulers took the name of *Augustus* Cæsar, till, in its latter days, Cæsar became the title rather of the vice-emperor or heir to this world-wide power. The word still survives in the *Kaisers* or Emperors of Germany, who, down to a century ago, claimed to represent the Roman Empire; and also in the title of *Czar* given to the rulers of Russia.

The first *Augustus* reigned long and quietly at Rome, for the Romans were weary of civil war and slaughter, and for some time their only battles were with barbarous peoples on the distant frontiers. This emperor encouraged the arts of peace, and gave his patronage to Virgil,



B 627

Photo. Anderson, Rome

### STATUE OF AUGUSTUS CAESAR

In the Vatican Museum, Rome



Horace, and other great writers of what came to be called the Augustan age, the most flourishing period of Roman literature. Augustus boasted that he found Rome brick and left it marble, so much did he do for the adornment of what was now the greatest city in the world.

But underneath all the glory and magnificence of this reign Rome's life grew more and more corrupt. With the vices of rude barbarians, the Romans laid aside the virtues that had made them great. The rich turned luxurious and effeminate; the poor fell to depend on the rich, or to expect to be fed by the government. In old days the Roman youth had delighted in manly exercises and pastimes; now all classes and ages came to love the demoralizing excitement of looking on at cruel sports exhibited in the amphitheatre or circus, where gladiators, that is, professional fighters, were matched against each other, or against wild beasts, brought from all the subject lands of Asia and Africa to glut the taste for blood that grew stronger among a people no longer fearless of danger. Hundreds, even thousands, of lions, tigers, bears, and other caged animals would be turned out to be killed at a single festival for the amusement of the Romans. With such exhibitions, and with free distribution of food, their rulers bribed them to slavish content, till the whole state, rulers and ruled, was rotten at heart; and with the rise of the Roman Empire began the decline of Roman greatness.

Augustus died at a good old age, A.D. 14. The most important event during his life passed unnoticed at the time. In an obscure village of the Roman province of Judaea was born Jesus Christ, whose teachings were to give new life to the world. From the supposed year of this momentous birth dates the Christian era, *Anno*

*Domi*ni, "Year of the Lord", by which history is henceforth to be reckoned among all civilized nations.

### Nero

A.D. 37-68

Augustus, leaving no son of his own, was succeeded as emperor by his stepson Tiberius, whom he had adopted according to the Roman custom. Tiberius and the six emperors who followed him turned out wicked or worthless men, all of whom came to a violent end, after reigning by terror and tyranny. Nero, the fifth in order, showed himself such a monster of cruelty that his name stands out as infamous above all.

This prince, who became master of the world when only seventeen, seems to have been by no means without talents and good intentions. He began his reign well; but before long the temptation of absolute power ruined his character, and he grew to be not only heartless but greedy of bloodshed. He poisoned the son of the former emperor, a boy who had been put aside in his favour by the arts of his mother. Falling out with her, his own mother as she was, to whom he owed his power, he had her cruelly murdered. He murdered his wife to marry a wicked woman, whom in turn he kicked to death; then he took a third wife after killing her husband. His old tutor, Seneca, one of the great writers of Rome, he forced to kill himself by bleeding to death in a warm bath. These are only some of the notorious crimes that made him hated and feared.

After so many atrocities, almost anything might well be believed against Nero; but he was perhaps innocent of the greatest crime laid to his charge. A fire broke

out in Rome, which lasted for a week and destroyed most of the city. It was said that the emperor had set this conflagration going on purpose to see how Troy looked when it was burned; and the story went that he sat on the roof of his palace, playing on a musical instrument, as he watched the awful spectacle. It is more likely that the fire began by accident. But Nero was suspected by the people; then, to turn away suspicion from himself, he threw it upon the Christians, and made this the excuse for a cruel persecution of their unpopular faith.

Several Eastern religions were brought into Rome by foreign slaves, and among others had been slowly growing up that obscure sect that would convert half the world. The early Christians were mostly poor and humble aliens, despised by the proud Romans, who for long took hardly any notice of them. Their meetings for secret worship gave rise to scandalous tales; but what set the common people against them was their higher morality, and especially their keeping away from the cruel fights of men and beasts in the amphitheatre, which was the Romans' favourite amusement. So Nero pleased the Roman mob when he had unfortunate Christians thrown to lions and other fierce animals. It is sickening to read of other punishments he inflicted on these innocent victims. Some he tied up in the skins of bears and wolves, and set savage dogs to tear them. Whole rows of Christians, wrapped in shirts of pitch, he is said to have burned as torches to light up the gardens of his palace. Such cruelty did not please the nobler Romans, but it was approved by the mass of the people, who let themselves be persuaded that the Christians were the enemies of mankind.

In the shows of the amphitheatre Nero appeared not only as a spectator, but as a performer. He had some skill as a musician and an actor, and he delighted to exhibit these accomplishments in public. He went to the celebrated Olympian games in Greece, where his subjects flattered him with as many prizes as he chose to try for; and he is said to have killed a rival performer who sang louder than himself. The better class at Rome were disgusted to see their ruler disgracing himself by such exhibitions; but no one durst speak his mind when a word from this suspicious tyrant might be the death of the noblest citizen. The mob were more ready to applaud their master in his performances, and he kept them in good humour by spending freely at Rome the wealth he wrung from the oppressed provinces. But when a famine threw the people into misery, they let themselves be moved to join in overthrowing his unbearable tyranny.

A great conspiracy against Nero being discovered, this gave him an excuse for fresh slaughters. It was a more serious matter when the army revolted, electing one of their generals as emperor. As the rebels drew near, even Nero's guards deserted him to proclaim the new ruler; and the unhappy tyrant found that he had not a friend. He fled from Rome, seeking in vain for some hiding-place; then, his pursuers being at hand, he had not even the courage to kill himself outright, but was helped by a servant to run a sword into his heart. Such was the end of one who, in a private station, might have lived decently and died happily.

## The Conquest of Britain

ABOUT A.D. 80

After seven bad emperors came a succession of as many good ones, beginning with Vespasian, an honest soldier, whose son Titus took Jerusalem after a desperate defence. Before the virtuous Nerva, and his adopted son Trajan, the last great conqueror of the Roman world, this succession of good emperors was indeed broken by the reign of Domitian, who played the tyrant after the manner of Nero, and, like him, persecuted the Christians. One of Domitian's generals was Agricola, of whom we know more than of other men of that time, from the life of him written by his son-in-law, the historian Tacitus; and his exploits should be specially interesting to us, as the chief scene of them was the island of Britain.

Julius Cæsar, as we saw, landed in Britain, and under later emperors part of it had been subdued by the Roman legions. This was not done without much fighting and several revolts against the invaders, the chief British heroes being Caractacus, who was carried in chains as a captive to Rome, and Boadicea, a chieftainess who is said to have led her people at a great battle near London. In A.D. 77 Agricola became Britain's governor, and during the next seven years he extended the Roman authority over a large portion of the island.

After conquering Wales, and rooting out from the island of Anglesey the Druid priests, whose religious enthusiasm inspired British warriors to resistance, Agricola marched northwards, bit by bit subduing all the country as far as the Lowlands of Scotland. He tried even to penetrate the Highlands, and fought a great battle beside a mountain which he calls Graupius, the

site of which is not certain. This word, misspelt in later days as Grampius, gave a name to our Grampian mountains. The Roman soldiers, however, could not get far into this rough country, defended by its wild Pictish or Caledonian warriors. Agricola had to draw back into the Lowlands, but his ships sailed round the north of Scotland, making sure that Britain was an island.

The limit of Agricola's conquests was the isthmus between the Forth and the Clyde, across which he built a wall, or chain of forts, to keep out the barbarian tribes to the north. This farthest boundary of the Roman Empire was afterwards moved back to the country between the Tyne and the Solway Frith, where fragments of a wall built by the Emperor Hadrian may still be seen upon the moors. Agricola seems to have intended invading Ireland also, but it is doubtful if he ever landed there. Before he could carry out all his plans, Domitian, jealous of his victories, called him back to Rome; and he is said to have been poisoned by the emperor's orders.

After the conquest of that great general, the southern part of Britain became a Roman province, gradually civilized in all but the wildest tracts. The Roman capital was York; and other cities sprang up, several showing by the name *Chester* or *Caster* (as in *Lancaster*) how they were originally Roman *castra* (camps). These stations of the conquerors were connected by paved roads, some of which are used to this day, and may generally be known by their straightness. All the country was dotted by the square forts which the Romans placed on hills that had often been strongholds of the Britons before them. In many parts of our island are dug up the remains of Roman houses, temples, theatres, and the churches of later Christian times; and even whole towns have been

found buried beneath the earth, as at Silchester in Hampshire.

Wherever they went the Romans carried their own ways of living with them, and notably the luxurious hot baths which they used so much, all the more in what would seem to them a chilly climate like ours. Perhaps the best of all Roman remains in Britain are at the city of Bath, which was already a Roman station in the time of Agricola. The natural hot springs of the place recommended it to his soldiers as a health resort; and beneath the modern baths are still to be seen the rooms and basins, heated by hot pipes, in which they loved to stew and soak themselves after the hardships of war.

### The Antonines

A.D. 138-180

The series of good emperors ended with Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, two of the noblest princes in history, under whom the Roman empire enjoyed for forty years a sunset of peaceful good government, known as the Antonine Age. So much were they respected that more than one of their successors took the name of Antoninus, hoping thus to get the credit of their virtues. Had Rome had many emperors of this stamp, she might have risen again to glory and prosperity.

Antoninus Pius, born A.D. 86, was adopted as his heir by the Emperor Hadrian, recommended for this elevation by his wisdom and justice when serving as a provincial governor. He showed the same qualities on the throne, making the happiness of the people his chief care. Happy is a nation which has no history, it has

been said, meaning that such stirring events as figure in history bring death and misfortune to many and fame only to few great names. This was the case with the empire under Antoninus, which now enjoyed a term of peace, spent by its ruler in encouraging works of public usefulness and benevolence.

Because he had no battles to fight, and because he shed no Roman blood, we hear less of Antoninus Pius than of conquerors like Cæsar; but all that we hear is to his honour. A pious pagan himself, who earnestly performed the duties of his own religion, he tolerated the growing Church of Christians, and protected all his subjects with equal favour. He began a movement for the better treatment of slaves, that ended in Christian times by restoring them to freedom all over Europe. This excellent man died after a quiet reign of more than twenty years, and was succeeded by his adopted son, Marcus Aurelius, who took the surname of Antoninus.

Marcus Aurelius was a still more remarkable man, as not only a virtuous and just ruler, but a thoughtful writer, and a successful general. He had been brought up in what was called the Stoic school of philosophy, that in the ancient world came nearest to the high teachings of our Christian faith. As a boy he learned to love truth and knowledge, to scorn luxury and vice, to be severe, as he said, on his own faults and indulgent towards those of other men. Those fine principles are set forth in the "Meditations" he wrote at odd moments of his active life, which has come down to us as one of the great books of the world.

Had he been able to please himself, this philosophic emperor would have chosen the quiet life of a scholar. But in his time the empire became threatened by wars

that called him to arms. Of delicate health and peaceful tastes, duty forced him to the hard life of a soldier; and most of his reign was spent in fighting against barbarians on the frontiers. In this task he distinguished himself by good generalship, and was able to keep all enemies far away from Rome, where he came to be venerated almost as a god. On the last of his victorious campaigns he died, A.D. 180, at a place which seems to be the modern Vienna.

One blot on Marcus Aurelius's rule is, that he allowed the Christians to be persecuted in Gaul, perhaps being deceived by false charges against them. Another fault he had which was half a virtue: he could not understand that other men were not as good as himself. Thus he adopted as his colleague in the government the worthless Verus, who at least showed the sense not to interfere with his fellow-emperor, and died before him. Then, instead of choosing for his heir some wise and strong man, as had been done in his own case by Antoninus Pius, Aurelius left the empire to his young son, Commodus, whose faults must have been hidden from him by paternal fondness.

Commodus took after his mother, a wife altogether unworthy of such a trustful husband as Aurelius. This spoiled youth did his best to turn out a second Nero. His only talent seems to have been for killing men and beasts with his own hand; and instead of taking the head of armies like his father, he delighted in exhibiting his performances as a gladiator and archer before the mob of Rome. He grew to be such a bloodthirsty tyrant that he was murdered by his own servants, to the general joy.

Such was the end of many of the emperors who now

came close upon one another, half a dozen of them once in a few months; or several competitors would be in arms at the same time in different parts of the empire. The appointment fell much into the hands of a body of picked soldiers, called the Praetorian Guards, who looked to be bribed for setting up or pulling down a new emperor. In the course of a century there came to power more than twenty emperors, whose names are nearly forgotten, and of few of them can any good be told. Thus the work of the Antonines was undone. While civil wars and fights between rival princes raged in the heart of the empire, its outer boundaries began to be broken in upon by hosts of barbarians—Franks, Goths, and other warriors from the north, and on the east by the Persians, again grown to be a formidable enemy. Since so many foes had to be faced at such distances apart, there were often two, or even more, emperors chosen at once, who more or less harmoniously shared between them the difficult task of governing and protecting a great power now ready to fall in pieces.

### Constantine the Great

A.D. 272-337

All this time the once humble and despised sect of Christians had been growing strong in spite of the cruel persecutions with which several emperors tried to stamp it out. By the third century the Christian Church had made converts all over the empire, and among them many persons of distinction, magistrates, scholars, officers in the army, and so forth, who were often Christians at heart even when they durst not profess the new faith publicly. The crimes and troubles of the age went to

break down men's respect for the old gods of paganism. Then suddenly the triumph of Christianity came about by the conversion of the head of the Roman world.

This was Constantine, named the Great, who, when his father Constantius died at York, A.D. 306, became one of the Cæsars of Rome. There were at this time no less than six emperors ruling in different parts of the Roman dominion. They soon took to fighting, two and two; and out of their struggles Constantine came to the top as sole master.

Very early he must have seen the worth of his Christian subjects; for one of his first acts was to proclaim a toleration of their religion. When he himself became converted is not certain. The church writers of that day, who loved wonderful stories, gave out that in one of his wars a fiery cross appeared in the sky with the words: "*By this sign victory*"; and another tale represents him as moved by a dream to put the name of Christ on his soldiers' shields. These seem to be mere fables. Constantine was not baptized till shortly before his death; and he appears to have been never a very devout Christian. He imprisoned and put to death his own son Crispus, either because jealous of his victories, or set against him by his stepmother, Fausta, who in turn was executed by the passionate emperor when her faithlessness came to light. But in some way or other Constantine became impressed with such a respect for Christianity that he ordered it to be in future the religion of the state.

Another great change Constantine made in the Roman empire. Several of the former emperors had not been Romans, but Africans, Asians, or barbarians from the provinces, so much were the peoples of the Roman

world mixed up by this time. He himself was born on the Danube; he spent his youth fighting in Asia; he was made emperor in Britain; and he never lived at Rome except on short visits. This city seemed to him no longer the best centre for the empire; and he moved its capital (A.D. 330) to Byzantium on the Bosphorus, which he christened New Rome; but it soon came to be called, after his own name, Constantinople, "the city of Constantine".

Constantine reigned for more than thirty years, as no emperor had done since Augustus; and under him the empire was once more united. But when he died in 337, it was divided between his three sons, who fell to quarrelling, and again it became torn by civil war till once more united under Constantine's nephew, Julian. He is known in history as the Apostate, because he gave up the Christian religion that had been forced on him, and showed himself a devout worshipper of the Greek and Roman gods. He seems to have been a learned, virtuous, and well-meaning man, though mistaken; and while he replaced paganism as the religion of the empire, he allowed Christians and all other believers to worship as they pleased. His reign, however, was short, for in less than two years he fell in battle against the Persians. His successor, Jovian, restored Christianity to honour as the state religion; and the worship of the heathen gods went on dying out all over the Roman world.

Unfortunately the Christians themselves had been splitting up into sects, that slandered and attacked one another almost as badly as they were treated by their pagan persecutors. Their quarrels were chiefly about matters of no great consequence, or mysterious doctrines

which do not help men to live a better life. In Constantine's day the main dispute was between two theologians named Athanasius and Arius. At Nicæa, in Asia Minor, Constantine summoned a council of bishops (A.D. 325), who tried to settle such controversies by drawing up what is called the Nicene Creed. This was taken as the doctrine of the Latin Catholics that now began to be the Church of Western Christendom, while other sects of the East held to their own views and ways of worship. Thus in time the church, like the empire, became divided into two main bodies of Latin and of Greek Christians.

### The Barbarians

A.D. 400-500

By the end of the fourth century Christianity had been fully established as the religion of the Roman state, just as this began to fall in pieces. The East and the West first became divided under separate emperors, with Rome and Constantinople as capitals. Distant provinces like Britain had to be abandoned, because the Romans were no longer able to defend them. And soon the barbarian nations of the north were invading the heart of the empire, whose degenerate soldiers could not stand against them, and its weak rulers often humbled themselves to buy off such warlike assailants.

These so-called barbarians were not altogether barbarous. They had gained some of the civilization of their Roman masters without losing their fierce manliness; and many of them were Christians, at least in name. The race that first made itself formidable to the peoples of the Mediterranean was the Goths, who came

originally from the shores of the Baltic. Under their king, Alaric, a bold and skilful soldier, they broke into Greece, then into Italy, where in 410 the city of Rome was taken and plundered with great slaughter. Now the proud Romans had tremblingly to wait on those half-savage warriors of whom their fathers had made slaves. Alaric next pressed on into the south of Italy; but his conquests were cut short by sudden death. His soldiers buried him in the bed of a river, its waters being turned aside by the labour of slaves, who were afterwards killed that no man should know where he lay among rich trophies of his triumphant career.

The Vandals were another people from the same region as the Goths, who, first overrunning Spain, passed into Africa and founded a new kingdom about the ancient Carthage, again grown into greatness. From this region, nearly half a century after Alaric, their king, Genseric, invaded Italy, again capturing and pillaging Rome. But neither Alaric nor Genseric made permanent conquests in Italy; and the warriors they led could sometimes be bribed or hired to defend the empire against other barbarians.

A more terrible bugbear to the civilized world was Attila the Hun, known as the "Scourge of God", for his victories over both Romans and barbarians. The Huns were a Tartar race, perhaps the same as the ancient Scythians, who, like the Tartars of the present day, wandered about on horseback, living in movable encampments rather than in towns. They had pressed into the heart of Europe; then under their fierce king, Attila, they swept like a hurricane across Germany, with great slaughter and devastation. It was Attila's boast that grass never grew where his horse had trod. Having

stretched his devastating dominion from the Volga to the Rhine, and from the Danube to the Baltic, till he could call out an army of half a million men, he attacked the Roman empire about the same time as it was threatened by Genseric from Africa.

Attila led his hordes into the Eastern empire, where, though he could not capture Constantinople, his wild horsemen not being fit for a siege, he destroyed many smaller cities, and forced the emperor to buy him off with an enormous tribute. Then, in A.D. 450, he turned his arms against the Western empire, pushing as far as the middle of France. Here, however, he was met by a Roman army allied with the son of Alaric, and Attila saw best to retreat after a great battle at Châlons, in which one story gives 300,000 as the number of the slain, though this is probably an exaggeration. Next he invaded Italy, where everything gave way before him; but he spared the city of Rome, and retired on payment of a large ransom. But he threatened to return for greater ravages, unless Honoria, the emperor's sister, were given up to be one of his many wives. Before he could carry out this threat he died suddenly from the bursting of a blood-vessel; and with his death the power of the Huns broke up among the quarrels of his sons and vassals, his followers becoming mixed up with the peoples of Central Europe.

Odoacer, son of one of his chieftains, was the next conqueror, who from A.D. 476 to 490 mastered Italy, yet he acknowledged the supremacy of the emperor at Constantinople. He was overcome and killed by Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, a wise, and on the whole a just prince, who differed from former invaders in settling down upon his conquest and trying to govern

it well, so that he may be called the first foreign king of Italy. The worst thing recorded of him is that he cruelly executed Boethius, last of the virtuous and learned philosophers of Rome; but it is to the credit of Theodoric that he tried to make the Christian sects tolerate each other, and to prevent them persecuting the unhappy Jews, hated by the Christians as they themselves had been by the pagans.

Theodoric reigned prosperously for more than thirty years, dying A.D. 526 at Ravenna, which was his chief residence. Even the last emperors of the West had begun to abandon Rome as their capital, where much of their state and authority fell into the hands of the Bishop of Rome. He, under the title of Papa, or Pope, grew to be looked on as the head of the Christian world in Western Europe, while another bishop, entitled the Patriarch of Constantinople, claimed the same rank in the East.

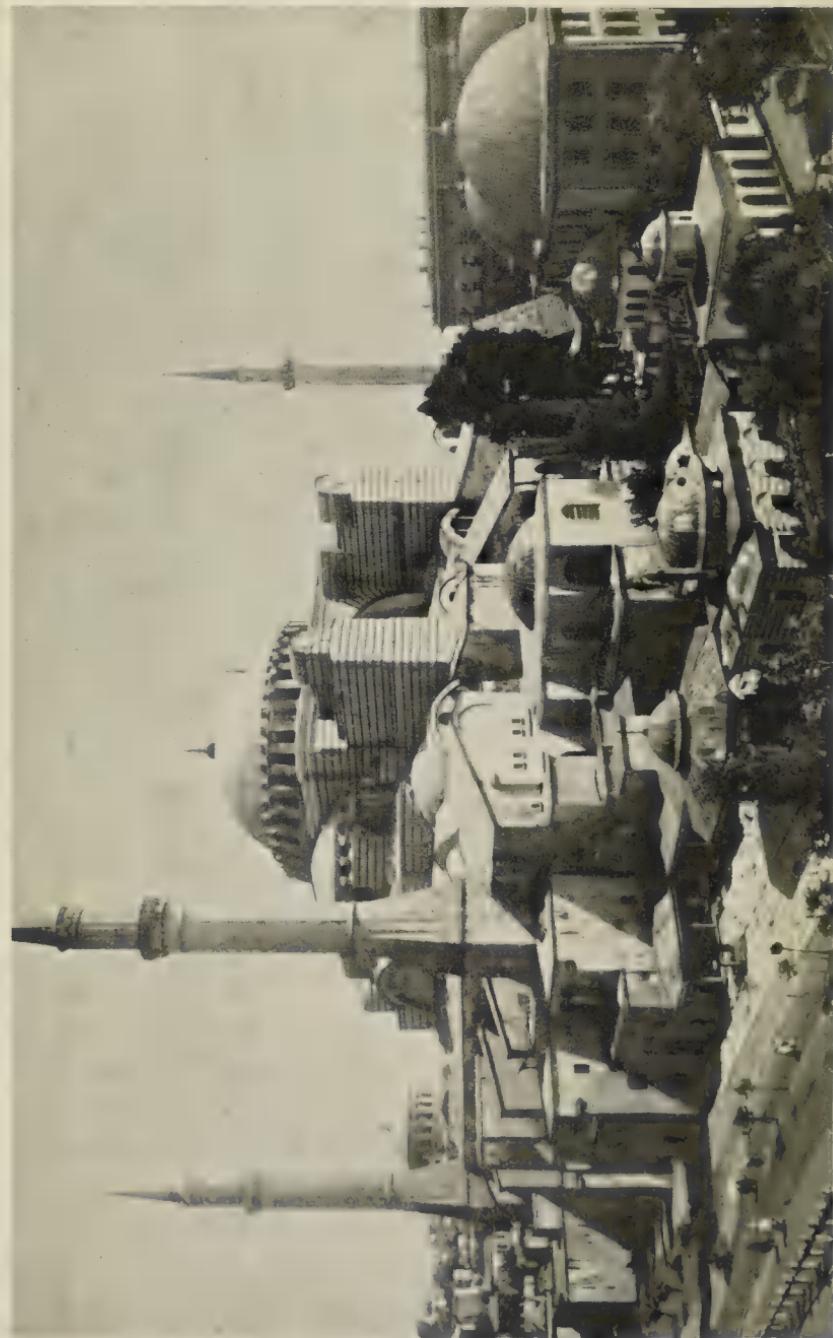
### Justinian and Belisarius

A.D. 527-565

After the Western empire of Rome was overwhelmed by the barbarians, for a thousand years emperors of the East continued to reign on the Bosphorus; but in the long list of their names there are few that do not deserve to be forgotten. They belonged to several successive dynasties, and often the title was usurped by some soldier or bold adventurer of humble birth; then many an unfortunate prince, if he did not end by a violent death, would have his eyes put out, or be forced to become a monk to prevent him from reigning.

The most celebrated of these emperors is Justinian, who, by birth a peasant of the Danube, succeeded his





MOSQUE OF ST. SOPHIA, CONSTANTINOPLE (see page 77)

W 627

uncle, Justin, a soldier elected to the throne by his comrades. Justinian reigned nearly forty years, made glorious by achievements in which he himself had no great share. Learned, and perhaps well-meaning on the whole, he was much under the influence of his wife, Theodora, a beautiful and clever but wicked woman, of the meanest origin, who seems to have led him into cruelty and injustice. It would have been hard for the mildest prince to govern here without violence. The populace of Constantinople was divided into two factions called the *blue* and the *green*, whose quarrels arose about nothing more important than taking sides for chariots of different colours in the hippodrome or race-course; yet their rivalry sometimes rose to such a heat that thousands of people were killed in the streets, and in one of their riots a great part of the city was burned.

The hero of Justinian's reign was his famous general Belisarius, who, if he had been a less honourable man, could have made himself emperor; and if such a man had been at the head of the Roman empire, it might have risen in fresh strength. He also was cursed with an unworthy wife, but his own character appears to have been a noble one. Like Scipio and Cæsar of old Rome, he led the army of the empire to almost constant victories, yet treating the conquered people kindly, and keeping his soldiers in such good order, that where they passed, it was said, not a corn-field was trodden down, nor an apple missing from the trees.

He began his career of conquest by invading Africa, rescuing Carthage from the Vandals, and bringing their king in triumph to Constantinople. Belisarius then passed into Sicily, and thence into Italy, to drive out

the heirs of Theodoric. Ravenna, their capital, was taken, and Milan, now grown to be one of the chief cities of Italy. The Goths offered to submit and to make their conqueror king of Italy, for now both they and the Roman army found themselves threatened by a new host of barbarians pouring over the Alps, the Franks, who gave their name to France. But Justinian, who himself would not take the field, was meanly jealous of his general's prowess, and called him back to Constantinople at the height of his success.

His services were soon needed to protect the empire on the other side, where it was attacked by the Persians under their famous king, Chosroes. Again Belisarius was recalled from his Persian victories, and by the intrigues of his wife and her friend, the Empress Theodora, he fell into shameful disgrace. But in his absence Italy and Africa had been reconquered by the barbarians, so Justinian saw nothing for it but to put his ever-victorious general once more in command. Belisarius went back to Italy, where he defeated the Gothic king, Totila, and captured Rome, which in these wars was taken and retaken several times, till it had almost been destroyed.

But the hero was always hampered and thwarted by the jealousy of the court at Constantinople. After a series of less glorious campaigns, he was again recalled, the command in Italy being given to the feeble and dwarfish Narses, a slave who had gained the emperor's favour. Narses, however, turned out a good general, and established himself at Ravenna, ruling as viceroy of the emperor under the title of Exarch. Fresh hosts of barbarians came from the north, one body of whom, called *Longbeards*, gave the name of Lombardy to the north of Italy. Here they fixed themselves so firmly,

that for a long time Italy was divided between the Lombard kingdom and the Exarchate of Ravenna.

Once more Belisarius was called on to save his ungrateful master from an enemy, this time nearer home. Another race of barbarians, the Bulgarians and Slavonians, threatened Constantinople from their homes beyond the Danube. Their army had almost reached the capital when it was met and routed by Belisarius, now old and broken down, but his very name gave courage to the imperial soldiers. Even then Justinian hardly thanked the aged hero, and grudged him the applause of the crowds whom he had delivered from slaughter or captivity. A few years later he was accused of a conspiracy against the emperor, whom several times he might have dethroned had he wished to do so. Though in the end his innocence was admitted, he had been imprisoned for months and all his property seized. A picturesque story represents him as having his eyes put out and being obliged to beg for bread in his last days. This seems to be an exaggeration; but it is clear that Justinian behaved with shameful injustice to such a good servant, who, after so great vicissitudes of glory and misfortune, might have exclaimed, as did his captive the Vandal king, "All is vanity!"

The best-known work of Justinian, which indeed was mainly done for him by learned lawyers, is the bringing into order and system the laws of Rome, a task that had been already begun under the Antonines. The codes drawn up under Justinian, and called by his name, are the foundation of the laws in most European countries. Another monument of his reign is the great church of St. Sophia at Constantinople, now turned into a Turkish mosque.

The best thing to be told of this emperor is that he had the wit to choose good generals, though not the gratitude to reward them. The day was now gone when an emperor of Rome had to be the leader of his own army. In Justinian's reign the title of Consul was abolished, which made the last trace of Roman freedom. The emperors, in name as in fact, were now like the despots of the East.

### The Dark Ages

We have now come to the end of what is often called Ancient History. It is difficult, indeed, to draw hard-and-fast lines between ages that really shaded off into each other: the fall of the Roman empire was gradual, as was the conversion of Europe to Christianity. But the overrunning of Italy by the barbarians seems to mark the beginning of a new age in Europe, during which the learning and civilization of Rome were almost drowned under the ignorance of fierce warriors from the north. Then came what are known as the Dark Ages, when Europe fell back into a half-savage state, from which a fresh start towards progress had to be made in the history of the Middle Ages.

Let us look at the different races of men who in the next thousand years would grow into the nations of Europe. The Mediterranean lands were mainly inhabited by the old Greeks and Romans, who now began to be mixed with stronger and wilder peoples. These conquerors chiefly belonged to the Teutonic tribes of the north, whose descendants still occupy the countries about the Baltic, while branches of them settled in other parts of Europe, as the Goths in Spain, the Franks

in France, and the Anglo-Saxons in England. On the Atlantic side of Europe the chief race seems to have been the Celts, whose language has not yet died out in Brittany, in Ireland, and among the western mountains of Britain. On the east side, towards Asia, were tribes of the stock called Slavonic, mixed with Huns and other Asiatic warriors, who more than once had nearly conquered Europe.

Most of these tribes were heathen, and the history of their civilization is the history of their conversion to the Christian faith. Here and there Christianity had early taken root among them in the days of the Roman empire, notably in Ireland, for instance, where this religion went on flourishing when its churches in Britain and Gaul had been overthrown by the barbarians. Ireland helped to convert its neighbours by sending out such missionaries as St. Columba, who is said to have preached the gospel all through the Highlands of Scotland. But the chief centre of Christianity was Rome, from which spread the doctrines and power of the Latin Church, whose language and literature became the common means of civilization over most of Europe. It was not so in Eastern Europe, where most of the people came to be schooled by the Greek Church, that had its seat at Constantinople.

Well known is the story of how Pope Gregory, the first great Bishop of Rome, was moved to send missionaries to our distant island. In the slave-market of Rome, where long ago men would be bought and sold like cattle, he saw some young fair-haired captives, of whom he was told that they belonged to the race called *Angli* in Latin. "*Non Angli sed Angeli!*" exclaimed Gregory, who was not above making puns: he meant

that, if converted, they might become not Angles but angels. So at the end of the sixth century he sent to Kent a missionary named St. Augustine to convert those wild Anglo-Saxons. The church thus founded was by and by united with the followers of British missionaries from Ireland; then for a long time the Christians of Britain all looked to Rome as the capital of the religious world.

All over Europe, sooner or later, Christianity took the place of heathendom, sometimes by persuasion, sometimes by force, as when the Prussians, the last people to be converted, had to be conquered before they gave up their idols. Everywhere arose churches, each of them a light shining through the dark ages, for their priests had nearly all the learning of that time, when kings and lords could seldom read or write. Not that the clergy were always much better informed, but they at least kept alight the lamp of knowledge almost blown out by storms of war; and the religion they preached was a continual rebuke to the cruelty, covetousness, pride, and other passions of ignorant human nature.

Besides its bishops and parish priests, the church had other servants in the great monastic orders that sprang up over Christendom. These were bodies of pious men who, grieved by the sin and misery they saw around them, withdrew from all worldly ambition, and bound themselves by vows to lead a holy life, and to do good by praying, studying, working, preaching, or teaching the young. Many such orders were founded by men so much superior to their fellows in goodness that they became distinguished by the title of Saint, winning reverence even from selfish and careless people who could not imitate their virtues. St. Augustine, St. Benedict, St. Dominic, St. Francis were among the most famous

founders of orders named after them—Augustinians, Benedictines, Dominicans, Franciscans, and so forth. These bodies usually lived in common homes called monasteries, such as have left so many magnificent ruins in Britain. Some monks, however, or rather friars as they called themselves, from a word meaning “brethren”, chose to wander about homeless, doing good where they could, and living on charity. Others, who are properly called hermits, lived quite alone in caves or humble cells, giving themselves up to prayer and meditation, or sometimes to such useful service as that of keeping a light burning all night as a beacon to ships on a stormy coast. Women also took vows to spend all their lives in convents or nunneries, devoted to good works, like nursing the sick or helping the poor.

Unfortunately monks and nuns did not always remain true to their good intentions. They began by taking poverty as their lot in life; but often the monasteries and convents grew rich through the offerings and legacies bestowed upon them; then with riches came pride, laziness, self-indulgence, and other vices. Again and again the orders were reformed by earnest men, or new ones were started with stricter rules. But always they were apt to become demoralized by temptations of wealth, sometimes so great as to be coveted by their worldly neighbours. So, with reason or without it, in most European countries their property came to be taken away from them by the governments, which now undertake to do much of the work—Education, for example—once left to the church.

The time came when the clergy no longer had all the learning to themselves. As laymen began to read and write, the Dark Ages were passing away. Books had

been rare when they had to be slowly copied by monks; but the invention of printing made them commoner, though still for long so valuable that they would often be fastened up with a chain, as may be seen in some of our old churches to this day. Then as books went on increasing, and with them knowledge of the past, while new discoveries taught men what was the world they lived in, a fresh spirit arose in Europe that may be called the dawn of Modern History. The Middle Ages is a term usually given to the latter part of the Dark Ages, when Europe had been more or less thoroughly brought under the influence of the Church.

Before going on to the leading features of this period, something must be said of another religion that sprang up on the edge of Christendom, and grew so fast as for long to be a formidable enemy to our faith.

### Mohammed

A.D. 569-632

After the death of Justinian there arose a new power in the world, through the religion preached by Mohammed to the Arabs, then by his disciples spread over a great part of Asia and Africa, and in time into the nearest corners of Europe. The people of Arabia were fierce and ignorant herdsmen, said to be descended from Ishmael, whose hand was against every man. While their neighbours the Jews were rising to higher conceptions of one great and good God, the Arabs had remained heathens, with their principal temple at Mecca, where a black stone had long made their most sacred idol, still looked upon with the utmost reverence.

Mohammed or Mahomet, born at Mecca, A.D. 569,

belonged to one of the chief families, but seems to have been so poor that he had to spend his youth wandering about as a camel-driver or trader. Thus he may have come to visit Jerusalem and other places, where he picked up some notions of both Jewish and Christian teachings that helped him to shape a religion of his own. It is hard to say how far he deluded himself into believing that he was inspired by heaven. Probably he began by an honest attempt to win his countrymen from their base superstitions, then found himself tempted into deceiving them by wonderful stories to bear out his character as a holy man.

The religion he taught was summed up in the words, "there is one God and Mahomet is his Prophet", which became the watchword of his followers, known to us as Mohammedans or Moslem, while they call themselves "true believers", and revile all others as infidels. Mahomet owned Christ and the patriarchs of the Bible as sent from God, but gave out that he himself was the last and greatest of the prophets. He was strong against the worship of idols, which he cast out of the temple at Mecca, and made this the holy place of his religion. Every Mohammedan must still turn towards Mecca when, several times a day, he kneels to say his prayers; and once at least in his life he ought to make a pilgrimage to this cradle of his faith. Besides prayer and pilgrimage, the Prophet made a great point of alms-giving and of fasting, and he forbade his followers to drink wine, but allowed them to marry several wives. These doctrines were expounded and enforced in the Koran, a book which Mahomet pretended to have revealed to him by an angel, to be the sacred scriptures of the Moslem world.

It was at the age of forty that Mahomet began to preach this religion, having now become a rich man through marriage with a widow in whose employment he was. At first the progress of his doctrines was slow; and for some time he had no other converts than his wife and a few of his friends and relations. Most of his kinsmen were so bitter against him that they got him driven out of Mecca, and even tried to kill him. He fled to the city of Medina, some way off, where the people received him better, so that now he began to gather a number of disciples. This flight, in A.D. 622, is the *Hegira*, from which Moslem nations date their era, as we count ours from the birth of Christ.

Like a fire that suddenly bursts into a blaze after being slow in kindling, so the faith of Mahomet began to spread with irresistible force. The fuel was the Arabs' love of bloodshed and plunder, which they could now indulge as a religious duty since their Prophet bade them kill all who would not accept his teaching. Having driven his enemies out of Mecca, he made this the centre of his power, which soon became that of a prince as well as a prophet, when almost all the tribes of Arabia had rallied round his standard. He led these wild warriors against the edge of the Roman empire in Syria and Palestine, and his name had already begun to alarm the Christian world before he died in A.D. 632, to be buried at Medina, where his tomb still makes a place of pilgrimage for the faithful.

Mahomet left no sons, and there arose disputes among his chief followers as to who should be the Caliph or successor of the Prophet. In spite of such quarrels, which split the Mohammedans into two great sects, hating one another to our day as they all hate Jews and

Christians, the progress of the new religion went on with extraordinary rapidity. Hosts of the fierce missionaries marched out into neighbouring countries, giving their peoples the choice of conversion or slaughter. Within a few years of Mahomet's death the Arabs had overrun Syria and passed into Egypt, where they took Alexandria, then the greatest seaport in the world, and are said to have burned its priceless library of ancient manuscripts. They conquered Persia and pushed on into Central Asia. Passing the Bosphorus, they even laid siege to Constantinople, but found it too well defended by the use of Greek fire, an invention, long kept a secret, that was like gunpowder in its alarming effect on warriors used only to hand-to-hand fighting.

Driven back for a time into Asia, the Caliphs here increased their power, till in a century they had grown the mightiest line of sovereigns in the world. The first check to it was in their own grandeur, when they fixed their capital at Baghdad on the Tigris, and here, amid temptations to luxurious ease, lost the martial vigour of their predecessors. Mahomet himself, for all his love of dominating over men, seems to have been simple and temperate in his habits, like the hardy Arabs whom he inspired to conquer so many rich and numerous nations.

In Africa, too, the Prophet's faith spread fast and far along the southern shores of the Mediterranean. Having reached the Atlantic it leapt like a flame across the Strait of Gibraltar, and blazed over Spain, that still shows magnificent remains of the Moslem dominion fixed there for centuries. The Saracens, or Moors as the Mohammedans came to be called in Europe, pressed over the Pyrenees, and for a moment seemed like to overwhelm western Christendom. But, near Tours, in the middle of France,

there met them a Christian champion, who won the name of Charles Martel (The Hammer) by the valour with which he broke their host in a battle lasting several days (A.D. 732). This counts as one of the most important battles in history, for the result of it was that the Moorish conquest never got beyond the Pyrenees; and it also led to the appearance of a new power in Europe under an old name.

### Charlemagne

A.D. 742-814

Charles the Hammer, that deliverer of Europe, was the captain but not the king of the Franks, a warlike German people who became masters of France after the Roman legions left it. Their effeminate kings had degenerated into mere figure-heads of the nation, all real power falling into the hands of an officer called Mayor of the Palace, or Duke of the Franks, in which rank Charles was succeeded by his son Pepin, who began to call himself king, as he was in fact. To understand how this family now came to take a lead in Europe, we must remember that the Western Empire of Rome had broken up, Italy being divided between the rule of the Lombards settled in the north and a viceroy of the Eastern Empire with his capital at Ravenna, while the Bishop of Rome, under the title of Pope, grew to be looked up to as head of this city, that still bore the name of a republic.

When in the eighth century the Lombards tried to extend their dominion by making themselves masters of Rome, the Pope appealed for help to Pepin, who crossed the Alps as champion of the Church. Having

overcome the Lombards, he gave over to the Pope his conquests in central Italy, afterwards known as the States of the Church. The Popes thus became temporal princes with this new royal family for their hereditary protectors. To Pepin's son, Charlemagne (Charles the Great), who again came to the help of Rome against the Lombards, Pope Leo showed his gratitude by crowning him on Christmas-day, A.D. 800, as Emperor of the Romans, that is, of Western Europe. Thus the power of Cæsar and Augustus was turned into the "Holy Roman Empire" of the Middle Ages.

Charlemagne is best known to us by this French name; but the Germans call him better Charles the Great, for he was really a German king, though his dominions included what is now France. He was born and died at Aix-la-Chapelle, which for long remained the capital of the empire north of the Alps, as Rome was in the south. Another favourite residence of his was Ingelheim, on the Rhine below Mayence. But for most part of his life he could seldom be at home, so far and wide were the wars he had to wage. For thirty years he fought with the heathen tribes on the north, from which had come our Anglo-Saxon forefathers. Several times he defeated them, now beheading thousands of prisoners at once as a terrible lesson of peace, then forcing them to be baptized in crowds; but as soon as he turned his back they would again rise to destroy the churches he had built, and to drive away his teachers of religion. At last he subdued them by building fortresses as well as churches on that side of his empire. On the other side he crossed the Pyrenees into Spain, and drove out the Saracens from the north side of that country. He had also to fight the Avars, wild Asiatics like the

Huns, who threatened Europe from the east, and the Wends, a Slavonic people, now lost among the Prussians and North Germans. Then on the west side of France he had much trouble with the Bretons, as little willing to submit to him as were their kinsmen the Welsh and Cornishmen to be ruled by the Saxon kings of England.

When crowned emperor, this prince's dominions reached over most of Western Europe, from the Elbe to the Ebro in Spain, and the Tiber in Italy. The Caliph of Baghdad, Haroun Alrashid, so famous in Eastern tales, sent him ambassadors with an elephant and other presents to win his friendship. He is said to have made a treaty with a king of Scotland, living at the foot of Ben Nevis; but this is rather a misty story, one of many such that gathered round the memory of that greatest prince in Christendom.

Charlemagne, like other German princes of the time, had little schooling in books; only when grown up, it is said, did he learn to write. But, though not learned himself, he did his best to encourage learning. One of his chief advisers was an English scholar named Alcuin; and he had a secretary, Eginhard, who wrote his life. When not engaged in war, he busied himself in founding schools, churches, and monasteries in all parts of his realm, as well as in building castles and villages. He brought singers and musicians out of Italy to improve the church services of the rude Franks. He is said to have written a book about farming, cattle-breeding, fruit-growing, fishery, and other matters of usefulness for his people; and he himself set them the example of clearing forests, draining swamps, and turning wildernesses into fields and pastures.

The great emperor was tall, strong and hardy, simple

in his ways, and a hater of the drunkenness that was a besetting sin of Teutonic nations. His favourite amusements were hunting and swimming. In his old age he loved to swim among his guards in the hot springs of Aix-la-Chapelle, which are still used for the cure of diseases. Here he died at a good old age, A.D. 814, and was buried in the cathedral he had built, where his tomb may be seen at this day. In the year 1000 it was opened to show his body seated on a marble throne, that came to be used in the coronation of future emperors.

What has been here told is known to be true, as are not all the stories about Charlemagne. Round his mighty memory grew up many legends little better than fairy tales; and he became a famous hero of fiction, like our own more shadowy Arthur. The Germans have songs and stories of his hunting adventures, his feats of manly strength, and the romantic love of his daughter Emma for his secretary. The French minstrels make him out to have kept a splendid court at Paris, and give the chief credit for his exploits to the twelve peers or paladins, whom he was believed to have chosen from among his bravest lords.

The most renowned of these champions was Roland, the emperor's nephew, who with his friend Oliver performed marvellous feats of valour against the Saracens, but was at last betrayed to them by Gan, the only traitor among the peers. The famous death of Roland is possibly founded on the fact that when returning from Spain the emperor's rearguard was attacked by savage mountaineers in the gorges of the Pyrenees. The legend makes Roland hold the Pass of Roncesvalles against a huge army of Saracens, till he was accidentally wounded to death by his comrade Oliver. Then

he sounded his ivory horn so loudly that at the third blast it went to pieces. Far away in France, Charlemagne heard that wonderful signal how Roland was hard pressed by the enemy. Hastily the emperor marched back, only to find the flower of his peers dead in the pass. A great gap here is still called the "Breach of Roland", from the fable that this hero cleft the rocks with the last stroke of his magical sword Durandal.

An unworthy son of Charlemagne, who brings him into quarrels with his great lords, also makes a great figure in the French romances. In fact, his only surviving son and successor was Louis the Pious, a well-meaning but weak prince unable to bear the burden of this great empire. It became divided among the three sons of Louis, who quarrelled among themselves; and thus France was now separated from Germany. The Carlovingian House, as it was called, descendants of Charlemagne, died out with a mad prince, Charles the Fat. But the title of Emperor remained in Germany, its power going up and down according as the holder of it could make his authority felt. It was held in turn by different princely families, and sometimes by a prince not a German, as when a brother of our Henry III got himself elected to this honour. Seven of the great German princes came to be known as Electors, because they had the right of choosing the emperor. In later times this grew to be a mere ceremony, the rulers of Austria being nearly always taken as emperors; but it was not till the year 1806 that they ceased to call their dominion the Holy Roman Empire.



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### STATUE OF CHARLEMAGNE

In the Place du Parvis-Notre-Dame, Paris



## The Norsemen

A.D. 800-1262

About the great emperor's time we begin to hear of a new race of robbers, who came not by land but by sea—the Norsemen of North-western Europe. The people of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark belong to the Scandinavian branch of the main Teuton or German stock that had sent out so many hordes of fighters against Rome, each in turn to be civilized and Christianized by its example. Those northern shores have many deep fiords and other harbours, from which swarmed forth heathen adventurers, leaving their own poor country to plunder richer lands, as they could more easily do, when, perhaps from the Romans, they had learned the use of sails. This seems to have been in the eighth century; after which they went on taking bolder flights, and for three centuries were the terror of all the coasts of Europe, under different names, Northmen or Normans, Danes, and Vikings, that is "bay" or "harbour men", as they called themselves.

"Sea Kings" is another name given to those pirates, who cut out kingdoms for themselves in many lands. Their vessels were no more than long open boats, holding perhaps a hundred men, in which it was a brave adventure to cross the rough North Sea; and many of them must have been drowned in these daring voyages. Such craft had high prows, often ornamented with a dragon's head or some other fearsome figure; their square sails were painted with gay colours; and round the bulwarks were hung the coloured shields of their crew of warriors. When a fleet of "dragon ships" had found its way safely to some foreign coast,

the crews would station themselves at the mouth of a river, or row up it as far as they could, then land to rob, burn, and slaughter with the most reckless cruelty, especially in fits of madness shown by champions called *Berserker*, who delighted in being, as it were, drunk with blood.

We may imagine what misery these fierce heathen worked upon peoples tamed by Christianity, who had fallen out of the habit of defending themselves against such invasions. Again and again the Vikings ravaged the coasts of Britain and France, making their way up the Seine as far as Paris, destroying wherever they went, unless they could be bought off by princes unable to resist them. They sailed into the Mediterranean, too, and came to land even on the coasts of Asia Minor, so far their sails carried them; whereas the Jutes, Angles, and Saxons, who had conquered England in a former age, appear to have had only row-boats to reach neighbouring shores.

At first the Viking raids were merely for plunder and bloodshed, but in the ninth century we find them trying to settle down in the lands they conquered. We know what trouble our great Alfred had with them, when they overran his kingdom; and how later on Canute was king of England as well as of Denmark. They set up kingdoms in Ireland also. The whole of the Hebrides down to the Isle of Man was conquered by them; and there, as in many other parts of Britain, they have left their names to remind us how they were once masters on our ground. On the east side of England, for instance, where the Danes were strongest, there are many towns and villages ending in *by*, which shows these to have been Danish settlements, whereas our

*hams* (homes), *thorps*, and *tons* (towns) mark Saxon names. One colony in which the Vikings may be said to have established themselves most firmly is Iceland, which still belongs to Denmark, and is peopled by descendants of these old Norsemen. From this, the adventurous Icelanders went on to found settlements in Greenland, which appears not to have been always such a cold and barren country as it is now. It is believed that some of these bold mariners landed in America, but did not stay there.

The most important of the Norse conquests was that specially called Normandy, land of the Northmen, a rich province of France, given up by its king to the pirate leader, Rollo (A.D. 912). This chief, taking the title of Duke, became a Christian, and both he and his people soon grew into the manners and speech of the French. They were so quickly civilized that, in the next century, the Duke of Normandy could lead an army of mail-clad knights to the conquest of England (A.D. 1066). Even sooner, the Normans had begun to conquer Sicily and the south of Italy, where for several generations they played a great part in the history of that troubled land.

Thus in various countries the sons of the Vikings settled down, tamed by the civilization and religion of the peoples who could not withstand them in arms. At home, also, the Norsemen began to be converted under two great kings of Norway named Olaf, who reigned early in the eleventh century. As Christians, this bold race ceased to be the scourge of Europe. The last great fleet sent out by Norway was in A.D. 1262, when King Hakon sailed round Scotland and up the Clyde, landing at Largs for a battle that was not decisive. But his ships were scattered or lost in stormy

weather, and the old king retreated to the Orkneys to die at Kirkwall. His son gave up to the king of Scotland all the Hebrides, except the Orkneys and Shetlands, which for some time longer remained a Norse possession, as still do the little Faroe Islands, farther north. Though their power thus died out of Britain, the west highlands and islands of Scotland, and several parts of England and Ireland, are largely peopled by descendants of the wild Vikings.

### The Cid

A.D. 1026-1099

The only western coast on which the Norse pirates failed to get a footing was that of the Spanish peninsula. But Spain had troubles of her own, divided as she was between Christian kings in the north and Mohammedan caliphs in the south, who were constantly fighting for the central part, now one side and now the other getting the best of their battles. In the tenth century the Moorish kingdom, that had its capital at Cordova, was perhaps the most flourishing state in Europe, certainly ahead of its neighbours in knowledge and civilization; and had it stuck together, it might have spread its power over all the Peninsula. But, about A.D. 1000, it began to go to pieces, split up among princes who fought among themselves as well as with their Christian enemies. The same thing happened in the north, where the Spaniards did not hold together, but kept breaking off into small kingdoms called Castile, Leon, Aragon, and Navarre, that sometimes joined, only to separate again under rival princes. So it came about that the war between these weak

states, Moorish and Christian, lasted, off and on, for centuries, till in the end the Christians, united under one crown, were able to drive out their common enemy.

About the time of William the Conqueror, a great champion of these wars was Roderigo Diaz, styled the Cid, or lord, in admiration of the exploits that made him the national hero of Spain. Wonderful tales are told of his prowess: how as a mere boy he challenged and slew a nobleman who had insulted his father; how in his youth he overcame several Moorish kings and rescued many cities from the Mohammedans; how he kept a lion that obeyed him as a dog, and, like Alexander the Great, had a spirited horse which nobody could ride but himself; how he fell into disgrace both with his king and with the Pope, but they had to forgive one who was so doughty a defender of church and throne; how in his old age he died when besieged in the city of Valencia, but his followers sallied out with his dead body fastened upright on his good steed Bavieca, and at the very sight the Moors fled in terror.

But such tales seem too wonderful to be all true; and the truth is that we know very little about this warrior, except that he seems to have been a sort of robber chief, who fought sometimes against the Moors, but sometimes against his own people. History at that day was chiefly told in ballads, or other poems easily learned by heart, like those about our own Robin Hood, who is just such another doubtful character as the Cid; and so, indeed, are most national heroes of early times. Spain has many such old ballads, most of them about the romantic incidents of the long wars between the Moors and the Christians. Poets everywhere have always been in the way of exaggerating the glory of their heroes, who thus

came often to be taken for much greater men than they really were.

What we know for certain is that, before gallant champions like the Cid, the Moslem kingdoms went down one by one, till the Cross reigned all over Spain. Their greatness is shown by the magnificent Alhambra and other Moorish palaces still remaining, and by mosques which have sometimes been turned into Christian churches, like the famous one of Cordova. Not only as builders, but as cultivators of the soil, and in arts and crafts, the Moors of the Cid's time seem to have been in advance of their Christian neighbours, who were sometimes obliged to employ Moorish architects and artists in the construction of their own churches.

In some ways, also, the Spaniards of that time were superior to other European nations, that have long ago left them behind in the race of progress. While from their enemies, the Moors, they picked up some lessons of civilization, their constant fighting with these Mohammedans kept alive among them a religious and patriotic spirit. The Pyrenees walled them off from the rest of Europe, and left them free to follow their own laws and customs, which gave them more liberty than was the case in France or Germany. They appear not to have been so much oppressed by kings and nobles; for, even before such an institution grew up in England, the Spaniards had popular assemblies like our parliament to speak for the rights of the people. In the stories, or legends, of heroes like the Cid, we see how such champions could defy a king who treated them unjustly; and indeed, kings who had so many enemies about them were not well able to play the tyrant, as did other sovereigns who, later on, became masters of all Spain.

### The Age of Chivalry

As the nations of Europe began to pass out of barbarism, there grew up among the higher class the manners and customs known as *chivalry*. This is the same word as *cavalry*, and meant originally no more than riding on horseback, a mark of distinction in the Middle Ages, as among the old Romans. While useful work was left to the common people, and few but the clergy cared to learn reading and writing, the only business fit for a gentleman was thought to be fighting or hunting, as is still the notion among savage peoples.

There was not much going to school in those days. A boy of noble birth would be brought up in some lord's family as a page, waiting on the ladies, doing odd jobs for his master, and taking every chance to show himself brave, hardy, and active. As he came well into his teens he was promoted to be a squire, whose duty would be to go with his lord to battle or the chase, to take charge of his horse and armour, and to learn from his example how to bear himself like a knight in due time. All along he had been taught the use of arms, the management of horses, good manners towards his elders and betters, and, above all, not to be afraid of pain or danger.

Having thus served his apprenticeship to the art of war, when grown to be a man, if he seemed worthy of it, the youth was made a knight by a solemn ceremony, often in a church. He then took vows to defend the Christian faith, to lead a pure and noble life, to be courteous and serviceable to ladies, and to succour all who were weak and oppressed, as well as loyally to fight for the prince whose subject he was. Many

knights did keep their vows, and tried their best to do good as they understood it. But many more, it is to be feared, showed themselves as cruel, violent, and selfish as if they had never been taught to be chivalrous. In the so-called days of chivalry, indeed, justice between man and man was so little understood, that the strong had too much temptation to ill-use the weak; and when we speak of chivalrous virtues, we are thinking rather of what those knights ought to have been than of what they were.

Over the half-civilized countries of Europe now prevailed what is called *feudalism*, which means the paying of rent in service rather than in money; then, as the chief service a landlord required of his tenants or vassals would be in arms, the feudal system gave the good things of life mostly to men best able to fight for them. The lands belonged to princes, who shared them out among lords and knights, on condition of their all being ready to fight under their feudal superior, for whose service each vassal had to provide so many armed men. Though slavery had gradually died out, the mass of the people were still little better than slaves, working or fighting at the will of their lord, who, in his turn, served more or less dutifully some king or prince.

Before gunpowder came into use, the best soldiers went on horseback, covered with coats of mail and other armour, in which they could not easily be hurt unless by those armed and equipped in the same manner. So heavy and cumbrous did armour grow to be in the Middle Ages, that if a knight fell from his horse, he often could not get up, but lay helpless on the ground in his iron shell, like a crab turned on its back. The faces of these warriors would be quite hidden by their helmets;

then, to show who they were, they ornamented their armour and their banners with badges or devices, which are the origin of crests and coats of arms, and of many surnames. Thus the English kings took the name of Plantagenet, a word meaning broom, from wearing a sprig of broom in their helmets; as other princes came to be known by such names as "William the Lion" or "Albert the Bear", because of these animals painted on their shields. Also, they chose mottoes for themselves, like that of our kings, *Dieu et Mon Droit*, "God and my right". These mottoes were often in Latin or French, the languages best understood all over Europe.

Knights and their followers, thus armed, had it all their own way in battle with common men, as a fierce wolf among a flock of sheep. So the poor folk were too often helplessly oppressed by their feudal masters, who cared for no rights but their own. The king should have protected all his subjects, as good kings tried to do; but often he was more taken up with making war on other princes, or trying in vain to make himself obeyed by his insolent lords. Then in the quarrels between great men, it was the common people who suffered most, as least able to stand up for themselves.

Germany was for long in a particularly unhappy state, when sometimes there would be no emperor able to keep its princes in order, and sometimes they were fighting to settle which should be emperor. The country had been dotted over with strong castles, many of them no better than dens of robbers, from which lawless knights sallied out to plunder travellers, and force peaceable traders to pay toll to them for the right to pass. These robbers were often at war with each other; and they made as little of burning and spoiling the homes of poor peasants on their

enemies' ground as of killing and torturing their own dependants who happened to displease them. People sometimes talk of the good old times, without knowing what bad old times these were for the masses of mankind.

While the empire of Germany fell into disorder, that western part of it which had split off from Charlemagne's empire was growing to importance under the name of France. Here reigned at Paris a race of kings named Capet, who, like other princes, had troubles with their oppressed people and insolent nobles. But this struggle so turned out that in the end the French kings got the best of it, and contrived to rule with more absolute power than their neighbours in England, who soon had to share their authority with the nobles, then with the common people acting together in national councils that got the name of Parliaments.

England and France, all along, were often at war through the way in which their interests came to be mixed up with each other. The first Norman king of England had been a vassal of France, and his successors went on holding and claiming territory in that country, so as to give rise to frequent quarrels. It was one of the peculiarities of the feudal system that a prince might be his own master in one part of his dominions, but in another part vassal to some superior from whom he held lands; and this was the case with the kings of England as Dukes of Normandy.

In France, as in Germany, all over Europe, indeed, wars used to go on not only between nations, but between princes and lords, to whom fighting seemed the natural state of things. So much misery and destruction was caused by this continual slaughter, that sometimes

the Church would interfere by proclaiming what was called the "Truce of God", that is, a rule that private feuds and battles should be stopped between Thursday and Sunday, and in Lent or other seasons kept holy. But nobody seems to have thought that there was any better way of settling disputes than by fighting them out; and even a knight accused of crime could challenge the accuser to prove it by a duel. The chief amusement of chivalry was playing at war in the meetings called tournaments, when knights would ride against each other with sword and lance, a sport carried on so much in earnest that the champions were often wounded and even killed before crowds of spectators, ladies and all looking on with such excitement as we might feel at a football match.

### The Crusaders

A.D. 1095-1291

While the rulers and champions of Christendom were thus fighting among themselves, there grew up among them an extraordinary zeal for making war on the Mohammedans at the east end of the Mediterranean, which had been the birthplace of Christianity.

All over Europe it passed for a religious duty, or penance for sin, to take pilgrimages to what was believed the tomb of Christ at Jerusalem; and the numbers of pilgrims increased when the troubles of this bad time made men fear that the end of the world must be at hand. Even through Christian lands it was a most difficult and perilous adventure to travel on the way to Jerusalem; then if he got there safely, a poor pilgrim might have to bear much ill-treatment from the Saracens who had conquered Palestine. So harsh and insolent to

Christian pilgrims were these Moslem masters, that at the end of the eleventh century the European nations began several attempts to win from them the Holy Sepulchre. The expeditions that went to the East with this design are called the Crusades, because their standard and badge was the Cross carried against the Crescent that is the symbol of Mahomet's faith.

The first crusade was preached by Peter the Hermit, an enthusiastic French monk, who had been to Jerusalem and could tell of the wrongs suffered by his fellow-pilgrims. In the reign of our William Rufus (A.D. 1095), Peter came back to rouse the indignation of Europe; then, helped by the Pope's favour, he stirred up many thousands of people to follow him to the Holy Land. But as yet no great princes and few experienced soldiers came forward; and this huge mob of ignorant fanatics did more harm to Christians than to Turks, plundering and laying waste the lands they marched through, and showing their religious zeal by cruel massacres of unhappy Jews who fell into their hands. At that time, and much later, it was taken for a Christian duty to persecute the Jews, who are still hated and ill-used among the backward peoples of Europe, while even in the most enlightened countries it is not so long ago that they came to have fair-play among their fellow-citizens.

Most of that rabble died on the way of hunger or disease, or in quarrels with the peoples through whom they passed; and such of them as did cross the sea into Asia fell an easy prey to the Turkish warriors. But it was a different matter when a large army assembled at Constantinople under Godfrey of Boulogne, one of the best generals of that day. He led into Asia some 100,000

knights and soldiers, fighting their way to Jerusalem, attended by a host of fanatical followers whose conduct made the name of Christian hateful.

In A.D. 1099 they took the Holy City after a hot siege, ended with such a slaughter of the defenders that the Christians could boast of riding up to their horses' knees in blood; and it was only when weary of killing that these champions of the Cross, remembering the religious spirit that had led them on their enterprise, washed away the stains of bloodshed and hastened to pray penitently at the shrine of the Holy Sepulchre.

Thus rescued from the infidel, Jerusalem was made into a Christian kingdom under Godfrey, whose heirs continued to reign there for nearly a century. Their chief champions were two orders of chivalry, the Knights of the Temple and the Knights of St. John, bound by vows to defend the holy places of their religion. The little kingdom was also kept safe through quarrels and wars among the Moslem themselves, but for which they might have sooner won back this outpost of Christendom in Asia.

By and by there arose among the Saracens a leader who turned the tables upon the Christians. This was Saladin, Sultan of Egypt, one of the noblest heroes of those wars. He seems to have been a brave, just, and generous prince, and though he was an earnest believer in his own faith, many stories in his praise came to be told over Europe, showing how the Christian knights recognized him as a chivalrous foeman. In A.D. 1187 he conquered Palestine, taking back Jerusalem, which he treated with more humanity than the knights of the Cross had shown, and promised to let Christians live in peace under his rule.

Against him there set out the third famous crusade, led by the great princes of Europe, the German emperor Frederick Barbarossa, Philip the king of France, and our own Lion-hearted Richard, always ready to go wherever there was fighting to be done. But this expedition fared ill against Saladin. The emperor was accidentally drowned. His son and most of his army died at the long siege of Acre, a port on the coast of Palestine that now became the chief Christian stronghold. The kings of France and England quarrelled and went home, Richard being then captured and imprisoned by his treacherous comrade, the Duke of Austria. Before returning, the English king had bravely fought his way almost to Jerusalem, but the jealous Christian knights of other countries refused to follow him to the attack; and he had to be content with a treaty by which the sea-coast of Palestine was left to the Crusaders, and Saladin promised to allow pilgrims freely to visit the Holy Sepulchre.

Soon afterwards Saladin died, leaving his power to weak successors; and their disputes among themselves encouraged the undertaking of fresh crusades. By this time crusading had become a rage, or it might be said a fashion, all over Europe. Kings, nobles, and knights showed themselves willing to "take the Cross", as the phrase was, and go fighting in the Holy Land. This they did partly in the hope of pleasing Heaven, or doing penance for their sins, and partly out of a love of adventure and plunder that led many a lord to sell or pawn his lands to raise means of equipping himself for a crusade. Often the Crusaders would leave their families for years, sometimes never seen again, sometimes coming back at last to find their homes ruined, their children

scattered, and their wives perhaps married to others, as is told in many romantic stories of this time.

Once arrived in the East, instead of fighting for the Cross not a few of those champions took to fighting with one another or on their own account, winning princedoms for themselves from other Christians as well as from the unbelievers, to kill and rob whom seemed an easier Christian duty than to do justice and to love mercy. The Greek empire of Constantinople, through which most of the Crusaders passed on their way to Palestine, suffered so sorely from them that its emperors dreaded these pretended champions almost as much as their open enemies the Turks. Between cunning and cowardice the Greek emperors did little to help on the crusades, and their treachery was met by violence on the part of the western knights. In A.D. 1204 Constantinople was taken by Baldwin, Count of Flanders; then here for half a century reigned a usurping dynasty of Latin emperors, as they were called.

Even among children broke out the mania for crusading. In France a young shepherd declared that Christ had bidden him preach a crusade; and as he went singing through the country, he led after him troops of boys and girls wild with the idea of delivering the Holy Sepulchre. In Germany some twenty thousand young folk were gathered by a boy named Nicolas, whose father seems to have been a selfish scoundrel, proposing to trade on the son's enthusiasm by selling these deluded children as slaves. The whole multitude became worked up to believe that they should cross the sea dry-footed by help of some miracle, and thus come to conquer Jerusalem and baptize the infidels. The people through whose country they passed were often kind to them, unless in encourag-

ing their extraordinary delusions; but others robbed and ill-used them; and it was in a miserable state of hunger and famine that the young travellers got across the Alps and down to the sea-coast of Italy. Many of them died on the road; many were sold into slavery beyond the sea, or had to become servants in Italy to gain their living; others perished by shipwreck when they hoped to be at last bound for the Holy Land. Good people in Italy came to the rescue of the survivors, and got many of the poor boys and girls sent back across the mountains; but too many were never again seen or heard of in their homes.

Seven great crusades are counted in two centuries, besides less notable expeditions. The last ones were headed by a king of France, Louis IX, who for his religious zeal in this cause came to be known as St. Louis. He had the ill-fortune of being first taken prisoner in Egypt, and released only on payment of a large ransom; then, some years later, leading another crusade against Tunis, he and most of his army died of a plague. About the same time our Edward I landed in Palestine and made a truce with the Moslem warriors. But twenty years later the Sultan of Egypt took Acre, the last Christian stronghold in Palestine, where ever since the Crescent has been master.

Though the crusades thus seemed a failure, they had important effects on the history of Europe. While helping to hold back the warriors of Asia, they increased the power of the church and lessened that of the princes and nobles, who had often had to sell their lands to bishops and monks to equip themselves for taking the cross. Travelling into far countries, these soldiers saw something of the world, which was a kind of education



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"DIEU LE VIEULT" (Peter the Hermit preaching the first crusade: see page 102)

From the painting by James Archer, R.S.A.

11627



for men who could neither read nor write. They came to know that Saracens and other unbelievers were not such monsters as they had believed, but men like themselves, who had much to teach as well as to learn from Europe. The figures which we commonly use, for instance, are called the "Arabic" numerals, because our ancestors got them from the East to replace the clumsier Roman system of counting by capital letters that was once general all over Europe. In more than one branch of knowledge, such as medicine and mathematics, and by new arts, sciences, and commerce, Europe now became richer through its rough dealings with the followers of Mahomet, who have since gone back in civilization as the European nations have advanced.

### Frederick Barbarossa

A.D. 1121-1190

The two chief powers of middle-age Europe, the Popes and the Emperors, who should have kept peace in Christendom, did not always live at peace with each other, for they had many quarrels as to which of them stood higher. The Pope claimed to appoint the Emperor, who indeed for long might not take this title till he had been crowned at Rome. The emperors, for their part, claimed to choose the popes. At one time the Emperor Henry IV was excommunicated by Pope Hildebrand, that is, cut off from fellowship with the Church, and, as it was believed, from all right to the obedience of his subjects, often ready to take any excuse for independence. So terrible seemed this curse, that Henry crossed the Alps in the dead of winter to seek pardon from the Pope, who kept him waiting three days, barefooted and

half-dressed, in the snow at his gate, before he would even see the greatest prince of the world. This shows what power the popes had, which became all the greater when it was settled that they should be chosen at Rome by the cardinals or princes of the Church.

Such disputes, and the wars of Christian princes against each other, went on all through the crusades, when their arms should have been turned against the common enemy. In the middle of that period one great emperor tried to bring back the strong government of Charlemagne. This was Frederick I, known as Barbarossa, an Italian nickname meaning "long red beard". He did his best to keep order in Germany, and to put down the robber knights, many of whom, indeed, were got rid of at this time by their going off to the crusades. All over the centre of Europe he made his authority felt, granting titles to kings and princes, and not allowing them to oppress the people, by whom he was looked up to as their champion.

Besides being emperor in Germany, Barbarossa also claimed to be king in Italy; and here he made himself not so well beloved. Many Italian cities in the north, weary of suffering through the quarrels of their princes, were setting up as independent states and joining together in leagues to defend themselves. This the emperor thought a rebellion against his rights, and was determined to be master of these foreigners. Six times he marched into Italy with an army, at one time to help the Pope, at another to fall out with him, as these emperors so often did.

And Frederick found it no easy work to subdue the Italian cities, which, by industry and trade, were growing rich enough to raise strong armies against any op-

pressor. At first the emperor got the best of them, and treated them cruelly as rebels. Then, as soon as he had gone back over the Alps, the cities, led by Milan, revolted again; and in his later expeditions he had bad fortune. The people of Rome rose upon him when he was being crowned there, and he narrowly escaped with his life; after which he had to fight his way back through the mountains with great difficulty. Another time his army was nearly destroyed by one of the pestilences that raged through Europe in those days. At last, at the battle of Legnano, A.D. 1176, he was so completely defeated that he had to leave the Italian cities alone and to recognize a pope chosen at Rome against the anti-pope, as such a rival was called, set up by himself.

Frederick Barbarossa gave up his attempts to be master in Italy; but at home in Germany he reigned with glory and justice, which have made his memory dear to the people. In his old age, when news came of Saladin taking Jerusalem, he went on a crusade, and was unfortunately drowned on the way to Palestine. The Germans would hardly believe him dead; for long among them went a story that the great emperor slept enchanted in a cave, with his beard grown to his feet, all his lords and knights standing about him as if turned to stone; and that he would wake and come forth to deliver his country in some hour of need. Such legends were often told of popular sovereigns in old times, as of our shadowy King Arthur, who perhaps never lived, yet he was said to have been carried away to fairyland.

## Conradin

A.D. 1268

Now threw the independence of the north Italian cities, several of which grew into powerful republics that could make war with princes, and might have sooner grown strong if they had not been too ready to make war among themselves. There came to be many such Italian republics, of which remains only the tiny San Marino, on the mountains behind the Adriatic Sea. The greatest of them was Venice, that not only governed a considerable part of Italy, but gained colonies and vassals in foreign countries. Some time was yet to pass, however, before Venice, Florence, Genoa, and other states rose to greatness among the ruins of Italy.

Though Barbarossa had lost most of the German emperor's power in North Italy, it was regained in the south by his son's marriage to the only daughter of the Norman king of Sicily. This helped to keep up the German connection with Italy, which long remained distracted by quarrels between popes and princes, and between the great cities, now taking one side and now the other. The two chief parties struggling against each other came to be called Guelfs and Ghibellines, from the names of two leading German houses that took part in these disputes. It would be difficult to explain what they fought about, and why they hated one another so much as they did; but in general it may be said that the Guelfs were the party of the Pope, and the Ghibellines of the Emperor, still interfering in the affairs of Italy.

A new disturbance came to this unhappy country when in 1266 a French prince, Charles of Anjou, backed

by the Pope, conquered Sicily and Naples from their German masters. The rightful heir was Conradin, then a young child, who grew up in Germany and showed promise of being a noble prince, as for one short year he shot like a meteor through the clouds of Italian history. Charles of Anjou, for his part, proved such a cruel tyrant that he was hated even by many of his own party, the Guelfs; and after a time the Ghibellines invited young Conradin into Italy, promising to help him in dethroning Charles.

Conradin, only fifteen years old, was eager to win back the kingdom of his fathers. He pledged all his lands in Germany for means to undertake this enterprise; then in A.D. 1268 he crossed the Alps, accompanied by his friend, Frederick of Austria, two or three years older than himself. He brought but a few soldiers, and had little money to pay and equip others. Some of Charles's enemies, however, joined him, till he found himself at the head of a considerable army. For a time all went well with him. He marched to Rome, to be received with joy by the people, though the Pope was on the side of Charles.

As Conradin pressed on to conquer Naples, he was met by an army not so large as his own, yet with the advantage of veteran generals. Charles did not venture to lead his own troops, but skulked behind them in disguise, like Ahab. Conradin and Frederick, inexperienced lads as they were, showed themselves more brave than prudent. When the French at first gave way before them they fancied the battle won, and allowed their soldiers to scatter over the field, some plundering, some loosening their armour to rest in the shade, some even stripping to bathe in a stream that tempted them

under the heat of an Italian summer. While they were thus off their guard the French reserve fell suddenly upon them, and in a few minutes had set them in turn to hasty flight.

Conradin and Frederick had to gallop away for their lives, and soon found how friends dropped off from them in misfortune. At Rome they had now such a cold welcome that they did not feel safe there. Dressed in peasants' clothes, and deserted by their followers, they tried to escape by sea, but fell into the hands of a treacherous lord, who delivered them up to Charles.

The tyrant showed his nature by cruel punishments of all who had taken part in this attempt against him. A thousand persons were executed, and several towns half destroyed for their part in it. Young Conradin and his friend Frederick were beheaded at Naples, a pitiful sight that caused even some of Charles's friends to cry shame on him. Valery, the general to whom he chiefly owed his victory, would accept no reward from the cruel king. Even Heaven itself appeared to reject his gratitude, for a monastery he built on the battle-field was overthrown by one of the ruinous earthquakes common in South Italy. His own son became a prisoner of his enemies, who were generous enough not to treat this prince as the father had treated Conradin.

But Conradin's fate seemed to be avenged by the dreadful massacre known as the Sicilian Vespers, in A.D. 1282. Charles and the French behaved so oppressively in his ill-got and ill-governed kingdom, that the people of Palermo, the capital of Sicily, suddenly rose upon them, in one night slaying every Frenchman they could find. This insurrection ended by the French being driven from Sicily, which passed to the Spanish

king of Aragon, whom Conradin, on the scaffold, had appointed his heir. A long time yet was to go by before poor Italy would be free from foreign princes, the last of them not turned out till half a century ago.

## Champions of Freedom

ABOUT A.D. 1300

It was not in Italy only that townsfolk began to be more independent of princes. In other countries too there were cities growing rich and powerful enough to fortify themselves with walls, behind which the armed burghers could defy their lordly neighbours that tried to oppress them. In the thirteenth century many German cities united in a confederacy against the robbers and pirates who preyed on their trade by land and sea. The northern ports, Lübeck and Hamburg, were leaders in this confederacy, the Hansa or Hanseatic League as it was called; and when several scores of cities had joined, it grew so powerful as to have a strong army and navy, with which it cleared the Baltic Sea of pirates, and even made war upon kings. Thus these cities, though mostly included in the German empire, formed almost an independent state.

Soon after the rise of the Hanseatic League, a whole district of Germany began to stand up for freedom. This was what we call Switzerland, a mountainous country containing few cities, but the farms of brave and hard-working peasants, who had been used to manage their own affairs without much interference from princes. By this time the empire had passed to the House of Hapsburg, that still holds the throne of Austria. The Hapsburg princes claimed to be lords of part of Switzerland,

and tried to govern it so harshly by a bailiff or deputy, that towards the end of the thirteenth century the Swiss were stirred to revolt.

William Tell, of whom we have all heard, figures as the hero of this story, told, as it has often been, in a very romantic way. The story goes that Gessler, the Hapsburg governor, set up his hat on a pole, ordering all the people to bow to it. Tell, being too proud to abase himself thus, was brought before the tyrant and condemned to death; but, hearing how famous he was as an archer, Gessler offered to spare his life if he could shoot an apple with his cross-bow from the head of his own son. He performed this feat successfully, the boy standing firm, in full trust that his father's eye was sure. Tell had kept ready a second arrow, which he owned he would have sent into Gessler's heart if the first had hurt his boy. The angry governor held him a prisoner; but he escaped by leaping from a boat, storm-tossed on the Lake of Lucerne; then, lying in wait for Gessler, he shot him dead with an arrow. The Swiss still show the spot where Tell leaped on shore, and the meadow on which his confederates took an oath that they would throw off the yoke of Hapsburg. The legend makes this hero fight bravely in the battles that followed; and he is said to have died in saving a child from drowning. But the truth is that Tell's exploits are told of other heroes in different parts of the world; indeed there appear so many doubtful features in his story, that it looks like a fictitious tale.

Whether this celebrated hero ever lived may be uncertain; but it is clear that in Switzerland there were many men of the same fearless and free nature, who agreed to stand by one another against their oppressors. When

Leopold of Austria led an army among their mountains, the brave Swiss peasants on foot were able to defend themselves with clubs, slings, and spears, rolling down rocks also from the heights upon the enemy. Thus, at the battle of Morgarten (A.D. 1315), was established the independence of several cities and cantons, or provinces, which, afterwards joined by others, grew to be the republic of Switzerland.

Seventy years later another Leopold of Austria again tried to crush the Swiss. At Sempach (A.D. 1386) the poorly-armed patriots stood against the Austrian spearmen, but were unable to break through their hedge of steel, till one brave man, Arnold of Winkelried, crying, "Comrades, look after my wife and child, and I will clear a way for you!" gathered as many spear-points as he could grasp into a sheaf pressed into his own bosom; then his comrades rushed on through the gap thus made, and, their ranks once broken, the heavily-armed soldiers were overthrown and battered to death.

These were not the only battles in which princes and knights learned to leave the Swiss mountaineers alone. The cities of South Germany were not so fortunate, as many of them, joined into a league, were for a time subdued by the nobles. But now began to come into use gunpowder, that was to make a great difference in warfare, putting citizens and peasants on an equality with mail-clad soldiers, whose armour could not stop a bullet so easily as a sword-cut. If there were never any real person who performed the feats attributed to William Tell, men of his spirit, with cross-bows in their hands, and by and by with guns, were able in the end to overthrow the knights of chivalry.

The invention of gunpowder seems rather a mystery.

The story goes that its properties were found out by a monk in Germany. It appears, however, to have been known to the Chinese long before; and its use in war is believed to have been brought into Europe by the Saracens of Spain about the beginning of the fourteenth century. Guns are said to have been used by Edward III in his invasion of Scotland, A.D. 1327. Not for a century or so later, however, did they become much used; and indeed the first firearms were too clumsy to be very efficient. But, once it was shown how men could be shot down before coming within reach of their enemy, one improvement after another made these weapons more deadly, till now, with our costly cannon and rifles, soldiers may be killed miles away by foes whom they have never seen. Thus caution, calculation, and science have become as important in war as the mere courage and bodily strength by which battles were won in hand-to-hand fighting.

### The Templars

ABOUT A.D. 1300

In the story of the Crusades, it has been told how bodies of knights bound themselves by religious vows, like the monastic orders, to fight for their faith, and to succour pilgrims in the Holy Land. Besides the Knights of the Temple and the Knights of St. John, there was another great order called the Teutonic Knights, who undertook to convert the heathen in Prussia. Such orders of military monks, made up of gentlemen from different countries, grew to be strong armies commanded by their own officers, some of whom came to hold the power and pomp of princes.

The greatest of these orders was the Templars, or

Knights of the Temple. At first they were vowed to poverty and humility; and their badge was two men riding on one horse, to show how they took pride in being poor. But when they had become famous through their bravery in the Holy Land, it was thought an honour to belong to this body, which soon became rich in money and lands, as well as in numbers. Wealth made the Templars forget their good professions; they grew haughty and luxurious, owning no one over them but the Pope, and their Grand Master, who held his head as high as a king.

The kings of Europe began to be jealous of this powerful body, suspected as they were of designs to master whole kingdoms. Their arrogance made them hateful to all classes, so that the worst stories were readily believed against them. They were accused of heresy, sorcery, covetousness, and scandalous crimes. How far such tales were true can hardly be said for certain now; but it is clear that the pride of the Templars had corrupted their early devotion, and that their wealth seemed too great to be got honestly. They had possessions in different countries, their chief seat, when driven out of the Holy Land, being the island of Cyprus. Their great palace at London is still called the Temple; and in other parts of England, too, they had houses and property. But most of their lands lay in France, which, at the end of the thirteenth century, was ruled by King Philip, called the Fair.

This by-name Philip got from his looks rather than his character, for he was a greedy and ambitious sovereign, always trying to win fresh territory from his neighbours. The wars he carried on cost him so dear, that he found himself much in want of money. Having

raised all he could by wringing taxes out of his people, he tried other ways of getting funds. He debased the coinage so as to make a profit out of it for himself; then people would not take his bad money for what it pretended to be worth, and that trick only helped to hinder trade and industry. He robbed the unfortunate Jews, who were looked on as fair game by most Christian princes of that day; but the Jews and other rich foreigners fled from France, carrying their money with them. At last he hit on the idea of taxing the property of the Church, which all through the crusading time had been growing rich at the expense of the nobles.

Thus this king came into a quarrel with the Pope, whose disputes hitherto had chiefly been with the Emperor. The end of it was that Philip got the Pope removed from Rome to Avignon, where seven popes in succession had their seat from A.D. 1308 to 1376. When he had the Pope in his power, the covetous king persuaded him to join in a scheme for taking the wealth of the Templars. That seems to have been Philip's chief motive; but, indeed, there was nothing too bad to be believed of those unpopular knights, whose power appeared so dangerous; and it was easy for the king to stir up the whole country against them.

Whatever the faults of the Templars may have been, their end was so terrible that we must feel sorry for them. By treachery, Philip got their Grand Master and sixty of the knights into his hands. Most of these were burned alive, after some pretence of a trial on charges to which they had been forced to plead guilty, under tortures. Far later than this a person accused of any crime seldom had a fair trial, as, whether guilty or innocent, he might be tortured till the unbearable agony made

him confess to anything, however untrue; and the worst of crimes in those ignorant days was being a little wiser and better informed than other people, who took everything they could not understand for witchcraft or magic.

Philip was then able to seize the riches of these knights in France. In England, and other countries also, the Templars were brought to trial, but the charges against them were usually found to be false. The Pope, however, put an end to the order of the Temple by one of his decrees known as bulls, from a Latin word meaning seal (A.D. 1312). After being thus disbanded, some of the Templars joined the other great order of St. John, which continued in arms against the Turks for centuries.

### The Black Prince

A.D. 1330-1376

Philip the Fair had married his daughter to Edward I of England, through which match in time arose what is known as the Hundred Years' war. The crown of France was held under the Salic law, an old Frankish custom by which women might not succeed to power which must be defended by arms. In England this law was not observed, and several of our most famous sovereigns have been women. When Charles IV of France died, leaving only a daughter, his cousin, Philip of Valois, became king. Edward III of England made himself out to be a nearer heir, since his grandmother had been daughter of a French king, but by the Salic law the crown could not be handed on through a woman. This was the dispute that kept France and England at war, off and on, for a century. There were really two long wars, with an interval between. In the first of

these the chief hero was Edward III's son, known as the Black Prince from the colour of his armour.

To gain what he claimed as his rights, Edward invaded France and met the French at the battle of Cressy (A.D. 1346). This battle was won chiefly through the skill of the English archers, who had already become famous; but here a rude kind of cannon were also used. The English long-bows proved more serviceable than the heavy cross-bows, which worked like what we call a catapult, and easily got out of order. On the French side was a large body of Genoese cross-bowmen, whose arms had been wetted by a heavy thunder-storm, while the Englishmen had taken care to keep their bow-strings dry. The French, too, were tired by a long march; and when the sun came out after the storm, it shone right in their eyes. Then, as their enemies' arrows came flying upon men and horses like snow, the French fell into confusion, throwing one another down and getting into one another's way, huddled together in helpless masses that made a target for the English archers. More than thirty thousand Frenchmen were killed that day.

The Black Prince, only fifteen years old, had been trusted with command of a separate body. In the heat of the fight, as Edward watched it from a windmill, a messenger came to tell him how his son was hard pressed and in need of help, which the king refused to send so long as the prince were not wounded or dismounted. "Let him win his spurs," said Edward, meaning that this was the lad's chance to show himself a gallant knight, as indeed he did. On the French side fell a blind king of Bohemia, who had been led into the fight by his attendants. His crest, three ostrich feathers with the motto *Ich dien* ("I serve"), was taken by the

Black Prince as a trophy, and has ever since been the badge of our Prince of Wales.

After this victory Edward took the town of Calais; then, by the mediation of the Pope, a truce was made between the hostile kingdoms, both of which had soon to suffer under a worse enemy than war. At that time there spread through Europe a plague called the "Black Death", such as still lurks in the filthy cities of the East. Often it has appeared in the West; but this seems to have been its worst visitation, which in some countries now carried off from a quarter to a half of the inhabitants, and often left towns and villages quite unpopulated. Many of the survivors were driven into a madness of religious fanaticism which set them cruelly scourging themselves in pentitential processions, by which they imagined that the anger of Heaven would be appeased. In some parts the mob turned its fury against the poor Jews, who were tortured, burned, and massacred by hundreds on suspicion of having poisoned the wells for the destruction of Christians.

When the plague had passed over, an English army again invaded France, and stayed there for years under command of the Black Prince, now grown to be a brave and skilful leader. He marched through the south of France, everywhere burning and destroying; and yet this cruel ravager was noted among princes of that day for generosity and courtesy. He made himself so hated by the French, that their king, John, was able to gather a great army, and came upon the prince with numbers six or seven times larger than his own. But fortune favoured the English at the battle of Poitiers (A.D. 1356). They held a country of ditches and hedges, where the heavily-armed French horsemen could not charge with

advantage, while again the English archers laid them in heaps, and set their horses plunging and scampering for the pain of arrow wounds, so that before mid-day the French were utterly defeated. The king and his sons were both taken prisoners, to be treated by the Black Prince with the best manners of chivalry, for he waited on his captive at dinner, standing before him, and complimenting him on his bravery. In all, the English had taken twice their own number of prisoners, and were glad to let the nobles and gentlemen go on a promise that they would come back to pay their ransom before Christmas.

Such was the custom of these wars: a knight taken prisoner would be kept till he paid a sum of money according to his rank; so the victors gained wealth as well as fame. The king of France was carried to England, but allowed to go back to raise his ransom, fixed at three millions of crowns. As he could not get such a great sum, he honourably gave himself up again, and died at London in respectful captivity. The famous French champion, Bertrand du Guesclin, being taken prisoner by the Black Prince, was invited to name his own ransom, and though a poor man, he thought it concerned his honour to fix a very high sum. The honour and courtesy of knights to each other were the good side of chivalry; but they paid little heed to the sufferings of the common people, by whom ransoms had to be paid in the long run, after they had been dragged away from their fields to make marks for arrows.

The Black Prince ruled several years longer in the south of France, causing much misery by his deeds of arms. He also invaded Spain to help a king called Pedro the Cruel, who ill deserved to have gallant princes





1027

### JOAN OF ARC

From the picture by Ingres in the Louvre, Paris

fighting for him. This prince never became king, for in these foreign wars he fell sick, and came home to die before his father. After his death most of his conquests were won back by the French. Then peace was made for a time, England giving up her claim to the French crown, but still keeping some possessions on the west side of France, while at home her kings had troubles enough of their own to hinder them from meddling much with those of other countries.

### The Maid of Orleans

A.D. 1430

After a long truce in the French and English war, the distractions and misfortunes of France encouraged the English kings to revive their claims to its crown. The French king, Charles VI, was mad; and his eldest son, bearing the title of the Dauphin, found himself helpless between two factions of nobles who did not stick at murdering each other, and brought about such sufferings among the people that many Frenchmen were ready to welcome a foreign prince as a deliverer from civil war. When young Henry V of England began to push his claims, the Dauphin is said to have sent him a load of tennis-balls as a hint he was more fit for play than war. But he was bitterly to repent of that jest. Henry invaded France, and at Agincourt (A.D. 1415) gained one of the greatest victories of English history.

Again, as at Cressy and Poitiers, the English archers were the strength of their army, whereas the French knights made light of bows as a weapon fit only for foot-soldiers. Again, the French were six to one in numbers; but Henry cheered his soldiers by telling them he did

not wish a man more, since the fewer they were the greater would be the honour of victory. The French spent the night before the battle in revelry and boasting, while many of the English took the sacrament and made their wills in case of the worst. Henry had the good idea of ordering every man to get a sharp stake, which might be fixed in the ground before him, so as to form a movable rampart against the French horsemen. The English again had luck in the ground and the weather, for the fields were so soaked by rain that the mail-clad French knights floundered up to their horses' knees in mire, then were driven back from the rows of sharp stakes, behind which the English archers stood stripped to their shirts, the better to draw their bows. So once more these bowmen overthrew the chivalry of France.

Henry, having lost many of his men from sickness, now went home, to be received in such triumph that the people willingly gave him means of raising a larger army. Two years later he invaded France with fresh successes; then one of the French factions having come over to his side, he made peace on condition that, marrying a French princess, he should become king of France on the death of the mad Charles VI, and meanwhile he should reign as regent in Paris.

But Henry died at Paris, A.D. 1422, a few weeks before Charles. Our Henry VI, an infant in arms, was proclaimed king of France, ruled in his name by his uncle the Duke of Bedford. Only the south part of the country, with the central city of Orleans, held out for the French Dauphin, Charles. More than once he was defeated by the English; and when the Earl of Salisbury led an army to besiege Orleans, it seemed as if the English conquest would soon be complete.

Yet now the tide turned with a wave of French patriotism that rose against the invaders. The chief figure in this movement was Joan of Arc, a girl about twenty years old, whose exploits appeared so amazing that at the time she was believed to have the aid of supernatural power. The daughter of a farmer in the north-east corner of France, she had been deeply distressed by the miseries of her country, and her enthusiastic mind became filled with visions that she was destined to rescue the land from its enemies. At first people thought her mad when she announced that Heaven had bidden her take arms, lead an army to Orleans, and have the Dauphin crowned at Rheims, in the cathedral of which the French kings were consecrated.

With some difficulty the Dauphin was brought to trust such a strange champion; then she got together some thousands of soldiers, at whose head, dressed in armour, and bearing a white standard with religious devices, and a sword which she declared to have been miraculously provided for her, singing hymns as battle songs, she marched to Orleans. Her arrival here put fresh heart into the garrison, hard pressed by the English for more than half a year. Though Joan did not fight with her own hand, she led out such bold sallies upon the besiegers, that after a few days they were driven away from Orleans, their general, Lord Salisbury, having already been killed by a cannon-ball, for artillery was used on both sides at this famous siege (A.D. 1429). But cannon and all proved not so terrible as the spirit of that simple girl.

The Maid of Orleans, as she came to be called, followed up this victory by conducting the Dauphin to Rheims,

there to be crowned as Charles VII. On the way several successes had been gained over the English, who now began to lose ground, while the uprising of French patriotism gathered strength. Joan kept on working up her countrymen to her own pitch of eagerness: she gave out that she would not be with them for more than a year; and she is even said to have prophesied how she would be betrayed. Next year, indeed, she was taken prisoner by some French traitors, who for a large sum of money gave her up to the English. At Rouen a French bishop was found to condemn her as a sorceress; and the English soldiers let this remarkable woman be burned alive, to the disgrace of both nations.

But her example had not gone in vain. The French factions made peace with each other, and joined to drive out the English, who soon had none of their conquests left but the town of Calais. This was not taken from them till Queen Mary's reign; but to much later times the kings of England continued to entitle themselves King of France, when they no longer held a foot of land in that country. During the troubled reign of Henry VI, England, torn by her civil Wars of the Roses, was in no state to win back the neighbouring kingdom, that soon got a strong master in Louis XI, who, cruel and crafty as he was, contrived to put down the insolent nobles and make himself sovereign of a united people.

### The Turks

A.D. 1000-1453

While the Christian powers were torn by such unchristian wars, we are not to suppose that the Moslem and other eastern nations lived in peace with each other.

The conquering Arab caliphs, who succeeded Mohammed, had in turn been overthrown by fierce Turkish warriors from the centre of Asia, with whom the Crusaders fought so many battles. Then more than once arose great conquerors, who swept like a storm over Asia and up to the edge of Europe, that again ran the same danger of being overwhelmed by barbarians as in the old days of Attila and of Xerxes.

The first of these conquerors was Genghis Khan, a chief of the Mongol Tartars, who rose to fame about our King John's time. He was only a boy when he came to be head of his tribe; but he mastered the tribes about him, so as to be proclaimed khan, or king of Tartary; then he was taken with the ambition of conquering all the world. He did conquer part of China, and the whole of Central Asia as far as Russia. His descendants spread the Tartar empire over China; they overran Siberia, Russia, Hungary, and even attacked the outskirts of Germany; on one side of Asia their armies came as far as Syria; on the other they tried to assail Japan by sea. But, like so many other victorious races, these Tartars fell by their own success, losing as luxurious lords what they had gained as hardy warriors. Their empire broke up; and most of the western Tartar tribes became Mohammedans, while those on the Chinese side commonly remained Buddhists, followers, that is, of a very old religion which, spread over the east of Asia, counts more disciples than any other in the world.

The Turks also, for their part, after being masters from Arabia to China, had lost their supremacy. But at the end of the thirteenth century their strength became revived by a warrior named Othman, or Osman, who founded the power known from him as the Otto-

man or Osmanli empire. He and his descendants made conquests not only in Asia Minor, but also on the European side of the Hellespont, and they might have taken Constantinople sooner than they did, but for being attacked from behind by another great Asian conqueror.

This was Timour the Tartar, or Tamerlane as he has been called in Europe, a Mongol emir or prince, who rose to power in Tartary about A.D. 1370, his capital being Samarcand, now a city of Asiatic Russia, where his tomb is still to be seen among grand buildings set up in his lifetime. Though he tyrannously trampled down many Asian states and cities, he seems to have aimed at ruling with justice as well as glory. It was his boast that under his government a child might safely carry a purse of gold all through Asia. He pushed his conquests as far as the Mediterranean shore of Asia Minor, where he beat a huge army of Turks and made their sultan, Bajazet, prisoner. Hence he turned back across Asia to attack China; but died (A.D. 1405) before he could carry out this design. As usual, his dominion melted away in the hands of his successors; but his grandson, Baber, crossed the Himalayas into India, and there founded at Delhi the empire of the Great Mogul, which is now held by Great Britain.

When Timour's dominion was at an end, the Turks again gathered strength in Asia Minor, and soon began to invade the Balkan Peninsula of Europe. They found few Christian champions able to resist them, for crusading was now going out, and the Greek empire of Constantinople had long fallen into feeble decay. One more army of crusading knights did indeed march against them in 1396, but only to utter defeat. Servians, Hungarians, and Poles also had some fierce battles with these

Turks, who went on fixing themselves in Europe, with Adrianople as their chief seat, and levying tribute from the peoples around them. In such wars they carried off Christian children by thousands, who, soon forgetting their race and religion, were taught to be Mohammedans, and trained up as soldiers to fight against their own kinsmen so bravely, that these Janissaries, as they were called, became the chief strength of a Turkish army.

At last the conquering Turks raised fortifications within sight of Constantinople, which was all the Greek emperors had left to them; and in vain they appealed for help to the Pope and the princes of the West. More than once the walls of this decaying capital had kept out the enemy; but now they were beaten down by larger cannon than had yet been made. The last emperor of Constantinople, like the first, was a Constantine, who fell among the ruins of the city, when, in A.D. 1453, it was taken by the cruel sultan, Mahomet II, its Greek population slaughtered or sent into slavery, its churches turned into mosques, and the cross thrown down to be replaced by the crescent.

Thus, about the time that our Wars of the Roses were beginning, Constantinople (*Stamboul* as they call it) became the capital of the Turks. Ever since they have ruled oppressively in that part of Europe, themselves in turn falling into decay and weakness. The little kingdom of modern Greece, and what are called the Balkan States to the north, have now been rescued from them; and they would have been altogether driven out over the Bosphorus, but for the covetousness and jealousy of their Christian neighbours, who cannot agree about sharing their dominion. But sooner or later the Turkish power here will be overthrown, so we have not yet

seen the end of that long struggle between Asia and Europe that began with Xerxes.

### Columbus

A.D. 1435-1506

There is no more stirring tale in history than that of the discovery of America, an event so important both to the Old and to the New World. Long before, indeed, the coast of North America seems to have been visited by bold Norse seafarers from Iceland, bringing back wonderful stories of it to be only half believed and soon forgotten. But Europe's first real acquaintance with America came through the memorable voyage of Columbus in 1492.

Christopher Columbus was born at Genoa, and from boyhood spent much of his life at sea. The Genoese and other Italians were among the most enterprising sailors of that age, when the use of the mariner's compass had helped ships to take bolder and bolder flights upon the open ocean, no longer creeping cautiously along in sight of land. It was hoped to find a way by sea to India, as Portuguese adventurers presently did by doubling the Cape of Good Hope to sail round Africa. After many voyages Columbus felt sure that by sailing due west over the Atlantic he ought to come upon the coast of Asia, for he knew nothing of the great continent that lay between. Trees and bits of wood floating to European shores from the west showed him how there must be some land in that direction. Sailors from the Canary Islands, then the farthest known land out in the Atlantic, had told him of sighting some coast far beyond. Then it may be that he sailed to Iceland, and

there heard the old stories of those Norsemen who had reached a western country across the sea.

It was long before he could carry out this idea, being a poor man, and finding no one ready to trust his bold guess. For years he went about from state to state, almost as a beggar, for means to make his great voyage. At last Ferdinand and Isabella, the sovereigns of Spain, gave him three small ships, two of them hardly better than big boats, fitted out for a year's voyage, with about a hundred men on this little fleet to share the fortunes of the hopeful discoverer.

But few of them had much faith in their leader's hopes, and when they lost sight of the Canary Islands they began to be afraid of the vast ocean that stretched boundlessly around their tiny barks. Columbus, steering always due west, thought well to deceive his men as to the rate at which they sailed, so he alone knew how fast and far they were being carried from home by a steady wind. As it was, their hearts failed them, and after being two months out at sea, some were even for throwing their bold leader overboard, since he would not agree to turn back.

Their fears grew all the greater when they found the ships entangled in great fields of floating sea-weed, which they took to be the end of the ocean. This now well-known feature of the Atlantic, called by sailors the Sargasso Sea, only encouraged Columbus with the hope that land must be not far off. Other signs of it were bits of floating wood, and birds, which always grew more and more numerous, flying to the south-west, in which direction he altered his course after steering nearly 3000 miles due west.

But now his men altogether lost courage. Even the

officers mutinied, all demanding to put back for Europe. Columbus eagerly begged them to hold on only three days more; then, if no land appeared, he would give up the search. He himself felt surer than ever of land being near, when a drifting branch was found covered with fresh red berries, while the sounding-line showed a change in the bed of the ocean, and in the air, too, there seemed to be something new. Sailors can sometimes even smell a coast not yet in sight by the odours of plants blowing off it.

Before those three days were out the anxious leader had grown so certain that one night he ordered his ships to furl their sails and lie-to, as sailors say, for fear of running ashore in the dark. Then, when darkness fell, to his unspeakable joy he saw a light twinkling ahead, the first certain sign of the New World he had sought so eagerly. After a night of excitement, dawn showed a green island clear in sight; and from all the ships rose a hymn of thanksgiving and triumph. At once the mutinous crew changed their mood: with tears of repentance, mingled with joy, they threw themselves at the feet of Columbus, begging him to pardon their insolence and want of trust in a captain whom they now were ready to look up to as wiser than mortal men.

The land thus discovered was one of the group called the Bahamas. When Columbus was first to set foot upon it, the tawny, painted natives came in crowds to meet him, as full of wonder for these white strangers with their ships and armour and thundering guns, as the Spaniards were for the rich greenery and warm air of a New World. Columbus believed himself to have reached some part of India; hence these islands came to be called the West Indies, and to this copper-

coloured people he gave the name Red Indians, that has stuck to them so long. He might as well have called them Chinese, for when, later on, he sailed along a larger island, he took this for the coast of China.

Columbus was to die without rightly knowing what he had discovered. He made three more voyages, to come upon other West Indian islands and parts of the main coast, but did not realize that here was really a great continent. It would have been only just had the New World been christened after him, which unfairly got its name from Amerigo Vespucci, one of the travellers who made haste to follow, once Columbus had showed the way; yet, in poetical language, the chief American country is often called Columbia, as we sing of Britannia, Caledonia, and Hibernia.

By the Spaniards, jealous of an Italian who had served them so well, this hero was treated most ungratefully. At one time they even sent him back to Spain in fetters, on a false charge of trying to make himself ruler of the new lands which he had given to the Spanish crown as beginning of its great empire beyond the Atlantic. He died poor and disappointed, not the only great man whose services to the world have been ill rewarded by his own generation.

### Charles V

A.D. 1500-1558

After America was discovered, Spain became one of the greatest powers of Europe. For centuries it had been split up between Moorish and Christian princes often at war with each other; but bit by bit the Moors were overcome, the last of them being driven out at the

time of Columbus's eventful voyage. Meanwhile most of the country had fallen into the two kingdoms of Aragon and Castile, at last united by the marriage of their sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella.

Their grandson Charles, having come to the Spanish throne as a lad of sixteen, soon afterwards, through his other grandfather, also inherited Austria, Naples, Sicily, Burgundy, and the Netherlands; then to this wide-spread European domain he added the vast American colonies now being conquered by the Spaniards.

Thus made the richest king of his time, Charles aspired to be emperor of Germany as well, in succession to his grandfather, Maximilian of Austria. For this dignity he had two rivals, our own Henry VIII, and Francis I of France; but in 1519 the German princes elected the young king of Spain as emperor, and he was crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle under the title of Charles V. This chief of the Christian world had some good qualities. He was brave and accomplished, being able to speak half a dozen languages, of as many peoples over which he ruled; and he proved himself a skilful general. But he was selfish and cold-hearted; then he had come to power too young to have a fair chance of gaining such prudent wisdom as was now specially needed by one in his high position.

When hardly out of his teens, the emperor had to deal with a movement that before long would rend all the west of Europe into two parties. The German monk, Luther, now began to preach what came to be called the Reformation of the Church from abuses and superstitions that had grown up in the dark ages. The Pope tried to silence this presumptuous monk, as he seemed; but many of the Germans and their princes stood by Luther; and

in other countries appeared reformers echoing his protests against the power and pride of Rome.

Charles, who took the Pope's side, summoned Luther before a great council known as the Diet of Worms; but the poor monk defied all the power of pope or emperor to make him silent on what he believed to be the truth; and, protected by his own prince, the Elector of Saxony, he set up against Rome the church that took the name of Protestant as opposed to Catholic, or universal, a title claimed by those who obey the Pope.

Though Charles professed to be the Pope's champion, he made no scruple of treating him ill when it suited his own purposes. He was presently at war with Francis I of France, his rival for dominion in Italy, till at the celebrated battle of Pavia (A.D. 1526) Francis was defeated and taken prisoner, exclaiming, "All is lost but honour!" When the Pope stirred up a league of Italian states against the too great ambition of the young emperor, Charles sent an army to Rome that stormed and sacked the holy city, and took the Pope prisoner. Francis, set free upon hard terms, joined Henry VIII to make another war on the emperor, who again was victorious, and stood up as the most powerful ruler of Europe.

These quarrels among Catholics went to encourage the Protestants of Germany. But though Charles was not a very pious son of the Pope, he had no mind to let his people dictate a new religion to him. At one time trying to put down the Protestants, at another to use them as tools of his selfish policy, he at last came to blows with them, and for years Germany was torn by a religious civil war. At first the emperor got the best of it; but later on the Protestants rallied, and drove him back into

Tirol, the mountainous country between Austria and Switzerland, which was one of his hereditary states. There, his army being surprised one stormy night, he narrowly escaped being taken prisoner, and found himself unable to continue the struggle. Finally, at the Diet of Augsburg (A.D. 1555), he had to agree that the Protestants might follow their own belief.

The Reformation meanwhile had been spreading into neighbouring countries; and from this time Europe was divided into Protestant and Catholic powers. In some parts the two communions remained mixed up together, as in the states of southern and western Germany and the cantons of Switzerland, some of which are still Protestant and some Catholic, while in others people of neighbouring districts, or even parishes, differ in religion. But in general it may be said that the northern countries of Europe became Protestant, while those about the Mediterranean stuck to the Church of Rome, since, for its own part, it sought to reform the abuses that had caused so much scandal.

The reign of Charles, that had begun so gloriously, ended in defeat and disappointment. He had made war on the Turks, those still-dreaded enemies of Christendom; but a great expedition which he sent against Algiers came to misfortune, wrecked on that stormy coast. The beaten French king was not ashamed to stir up the Turks against his enemy the emperor, who did not prove so successful in another war with France. With Catholics, Protestants, and Turks all turned against him, and humbled by his own vassals in Germany, Charles grew so sick of life, that he resolved to lay down his rank and power, as sovereigns have often done when they found what a heavy burden crowns may

be. He could not get the princes of Germany to choose his son Philip as emperor; but this dignity was given to his brother Ferdinand, while Philip succeeded him as king of Spain, and lord of his other hereditary lands.

Having thus abdicated, the ex-emperor spent the rest of his days in a Spanish monastery. Here, to make up for his worldly-minded life, in his old age he played the fanatical bigot, regretting that he had not put Luther to death, and by letter spurring on his son Philip to cruel persecutions of the Protestants. Among the religious exercises by which he thought to atone for his sins, he appears to have gone through the ceremony of his own burial, being put alive into his coffin and hearing the funeral service chanted round him. But while acting the part of a penitent, he kept on eating and drinking more than was good for him, and thus brought himself to a miserable end before his sixtieth year.

## Philip II

A.D. 1527-1598

Charles V's son Philip, who in 1556 succeeded his father as king of Spain, has left one of the most infamous names in modern history. He was a cruel, selfish, and obstinate bigot, put in a position to work misery among millions of his fellow men. He prided himself on his zeal for religion, which he showed in persecution of all who did not agree with him much more than by Christian virtues of his own. Under him flourished the Inquisition, a secret court set up for the punishment of Jews, Turks, and heretics from the doctrine of Rome. The Inquisition punished men not for what

they did, but for what they thought or were supposed to think; and anyone accused before it was as good as condemned. Shut up in a dark prison, the poor victim might soon be starved, tortured, worried, and frightened into confessing himself guilty of wrong belief; then such unfortunates, whose only crime often was their being more dutiful or thoughtful than their neighbours, were led out by dozens and scores to be burned alive in public. Philip loved looking on at such a horrible spectacle, which in Spain was known as an *auto de fé* (act of faith). So many people were thus cruelly put to death, that the name of the Inquisition became hated by good Catholics; but it was not abolished till about a century ago. Under Philip's patronage it was so active as to stamp out in Spain not only any disposition to heresy, but all public spirit and free thought, a loss that brought this country to its present feeble state.

Among Philip's wide domains were the Netherlands, including Holland and Belgium, then a prosperous land of merchants and artisans, the richest in Europe, containing hundreds of busy towns and thousands of thriving villages. Many of the people favoured the Protestant Reformation, to put down which Charles and Philip introduced the Inquisition into these territories, where tens of thousands came to be burned or otherwise ill-used in the name of religion. This, with other oppressions, made the foreign yoke of Spain so hateful to the Netherlanders that many of them rose in revolt, taking the nickname of the "Beggars", among whom were numbered some of the chief men in the country.

Philip was too infirm, or too cowardly, to fight against these rebels himself; but, for the lifetime of a generation, the war was carried on by his viceroys and generals,



Photo, Mansell

THE DEFEAT OF THE SPANISH ARMADA (see page 140)

From a contemporary engraving



notably by the cruel Duke of Alva, a skilful commander, who boasted that he had executed nearly 20,000 Netherlanders, besides all those killed in battle. Thus for a time the country seemed to be subdued, as well as almost ruined, its trade being destroyed and the people emigrating by hundreds of thousands to take refuge in England and Germany.

The tyranny of Alva provoked a more determined rebellion, the chief seat of which was the northern provinces known as Holland. This movement found a leader in William, Prince of Orange, who took his title from a small principality in the south of France, but had his principal estates in the Netherlands. Another William of Orange, his descendant, came to be king of England. This first famous Prince of Orange had the by-name of William the Silent, because he knew how to keep his own counsel, and was better at deeds than at words. At first he had been one of the king's principal counsellors; but the brutality of the Spanish soldiers drove him into declaring himself a Protestant and a patriot; then he exerted himself to bring about a union of the northern provinces, of which he was appointed stadtholder, or governor. The rest of his life was spent in efforts to keep this union together and to drive out the Spaniards, tasks in which he showed rare wisdom and courage. Philip having set a price on his head, attempts were made to assassinate him; and at last (A.D. 1582) he was murdered by a treacherous fanatic, to the grief of the whole people.

After his death the Hollanders, under his son Maurice, kept up the struggle with such desperation, that they did not hesitate to break the dykes protecting their low country from the sea, and flood the fields, by way of

hindering the advance of the enemy. It seemed wonderful how those simple Dutch citizens and peasants, inspired by love of freedom, were often able to beat back Philip's well-armed and disciplined soldiery. In the southern provinces the resistance was less dogged, and these parts lay more exposed to the Spanish armies. So the end of that long rebellion was, that what is now known as Belgium remained mainly Catholic and a dependency of Spain, while the northern states made good their independence as the United Provinces of Holland, soon standing high among the Protestant powers, and for long taking a lead as a maritime and commercial country. Philip never would give up the hope of reconquering them; but before he died he had the bitterness of seeing these provinces rescued from his tyranny and ranked among his enemies.

This king's private life was as unhappy as his reign was unfortunate and harmful. He suffered much from ill-health and melancholy, which may account for his harsh temper. He was married four times, but none of his wives lived long. His only son, Don Carlos, had a dark fate that is one of the puzzles of history. He seems to have been a foolish and worthless youth; but it is not quite clear how he offended his father so deeply that he was put in prison, and there died, murdered by the king's orders, according to one story, while another makes out that he took his own life in despair.

Philip's second wife was our Queen Mary, an alliance disliked in England, and one that brought no good to either country. When Mary died, he wanted to marry Queen Elizabeth, who would have nothing to say to him, bad husband as he had been to her sister. Later on he tried to conquer England by the famous Armada of 1588,

but that enterprise was wrecked by the winds and waves as much as by the gallantry of our sailors, who, both Protestants and Catholics, were resolute not to let the gloomy tyrant set foot in England.

He was more successful in conquering Portugal, which now for a time became united to its neighbour Spain. All his life, off and on, he was at war with France; and his zeal for the Church of Rome did not hinder him from stirring up the French Protestants against their own king, though his common policy was one of hatred towards these reformers. But when he died, near the end of the century, what he had done by a reign of cruel oppression and sly tricks was bringing to poverty-stricken feebleness a country which he had inherited as the greatest kingdom of Europe.

### Sebastian of Portugal

A.D. 1578

On the west side of Spain lies the little kingdom of Portugal, which has not often played a prominent part in European history. Yet even before Columbus, the Portuguese sailors took a lead in maritime adventure. It was they who discovered the Cape of Good Hope, and first reached India by sailing round it and across the Indian Ocean. They planted colonies in Asia, Africa, and America, besides the islands of Madeira and the Azores in the Atlantic. So at one time Portugal seemed likely to grow into a great nation; but it grew soon weakened by bigotry and bad government. In the days of Philip II it came to ruin through the romantic folly of its young king, Sebastian, inflamed as he was by the notion of leading a new crusade against the Moham-

medan warriors who had been at last driven back into Africa.

While the Moors had lost their conquests in the Peninsula, the Turks, at the other end of the Mediterranean, were still a terror to Europe, now by sea as well as by land. In fleets of galleys, rowed by slaves, they made raids upon the commerce and the shores of Christian nations. A famous story of these times was the siege of Malta (A.D. 1565), bravely defended against them by the Knights of St. John, who held this island till it passed into the hands of Britain. A little later the Christian powers of the Mediterranean, for once not at war with each other, joined together to send out a great fleet, which defeated the Turks at the battle of Lepanto (A.D. 1571), where Cervantes, the author of *Don Quixote*, lost his hand.

But still the Moslem sailors went on plaguing Europe. On the Barbary coast of Africa opposite Italy, Tunis, Algiers, and other places had become dens of pirates, thence sallying out to prey on the trade of the Mediterranean and enslave Christian captives; later on they ventured into the Atlantic, and even as far as the coast of Ireland. Many a Christian fell into their hands to pine, like Cervantes, in cruel slavery, unless he could be ransomed by his friends, or make a daring escape, as some English sailors did now and then. It was not till the nineteenth century that our fleet put down such bold pirates; then Algiers, their chief fortress, was at last taken by a French army. Charles V had led an expedition against that pirate city, but was defeated, as other assailants have been, by the stormy winds and waves that defend its coast.

Sebastian of Portugal, who was Charles V's grandson,

burned to achieve the adventure of carrying the Cross against the Crescent in Africa, but he was more adventurous than prudent. He already held some territory on the coast of Morocco, opposite Spain; and when a pretender to the throne of that country sought his aid, he seized the excuse for carrying out his wild designs. All the army he could get together was about 17,000 men, horse and foot; and with this force the young king invaded Morocco (A.D. 1578).

Here Abdelmelech, the Moorish emperor, came against him with six or seven times his own numbers, who threatened to surround the Christian army and cut it off from supplies. Experienced officers advised Sebastian to retreat in time to the coast, where his starving soldiers might get provisions from their ships. The hot-headed king, however, was for fighting at all risks. He flung himself among the Moors, charging so gallantly that they were driven back for a time, and their prince was killed. Already the Portuguese knights began to rejoice over what seemed a victory. But the Moorish hosts rallied and closed in upon the Christians, attacking them from the rear as well as in front. Sebastian's little army, surrounded and thrown into confusion, was cut to pieces by the lances and scimitars of the foe, more than half of them being killed, and many of the rest taken captive. The king himself, it is said, might have escaped, but would not abandon the brave men whom he had led into such danger. He refused to give up his sword, and died fighting among the rout, only twenty-four years old.

This was the disaster that has been called the last of the crusades. The army of Portugal being annihilated, the country was presently seized by its rapacious neighbour, Philip of Spain, and did not recover its indepen-

dence till the next century. But the people would hardly believe that their brave young king was dead. For long afterwards he lived in their memory as an enchanted hero, like Barbarossa of Germany or James IV of Scotland after Flodden; and even so late as Napoleon's time the ignorant Portuguese hoped that Sebastian would appear again to deliver them from that oppressor, as was done by a wiser hero, Wellington.

### Henry of Navarre

A.D. 1553-1610

While other parts of Europe were being torn by wars between Catholics and Protestants, France had her share of the same troubles. Here the Protestants, known as Huguenots, made a minority, yet with several of the chief nobles on their side. The leaders of the opposite party were the house of Guise, dukes of Lorraine, who formed a great League of Catholics to put down Protestantism. Between these two parties went on at intervals a long and bitter war, ended at last by the Huguenot leader gaining the throne, but at the same time becoming a Catholic.

For most of this troubled time France was ruled successively by three brothers, Francis II, Charles IX, and Henry III, the oldest of them the first husband of the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots, all the three young and foolish, and much under the influence of their mother, an Italian princess, Catharine di Medici. She and her sons on the whole favoured the Catholics, but did not stick at playing false to them when it suited their own schemes. The power of the Crown was so feeble that it could not keep the peace between the two parties, even

had these kings been wiser and better men. Under them, then, the history of France makes a sad tale of treacheries, murders, and massacres, besides open battles.

The most celebrated of these massacres is that of St. Bartholomew's Day, A.D. 1572, when Charles IX and his mother stirred up the mob of Paris to kill all the Huguenots they could lay hands on, taken by surprise in a terrible night of bloodshed. This butchery spread into other parts of France, and at least ten thousand people were then murdered; some accounts make the victims ten times as many. The Huguenots, too, sometimes cruelly slaughtered Catholics fallen into their power; and the king's party behaved treacherously to both religions. When the Duke of Guise seemed to have grown too powerful, he was murdered by orders of Henry III, who himself came to be assassinated by a fanatical monk, while he was fighting against the Catholic leaders with Huguenot soldiers now on his side.

None of the three brothers leaving a son, the heir to their throne was a distant cousin, Henry of Bourbon, who, through his mother, had already become king of Navarre, a poor mountainous region between France and Spain. Here Henry had been roughly brought up among village children, playing and fighting and tumbling about like the rest, a wholesome discipline that made him strong and hardy, very different from the effeminate kings of France. At fifteen he was already serving as a soldier, and soon distinguished himself as a fighter on the Protestant side, his mother having educated him in that religion. But the fact is that Henry had no great zeal for either creed. He married a sister of the French king, and was in Paris at the massacre of St. Bartholomew, when, to save his life, he pretended to turn Catholic.

Then again he became the champion of the Huguenots, and of the crown of France against the Guises and the League.

On succeeding to Henry III, the king of Navarre was not recognized by all France, and for some years he had to fight for his throne. The League set up his uncle as a rival. He found himself kept out of the capital, Paris, which was strongly Catholic. He had more than one battle with armies of his own people, backed by foreign soldiers; but in A.D. 1590 he won a great victory at Ivry, scattering the forces of the League.

“Their ranks are breaking like thin clouds before a Biscay gale,  
The field is heaped with bleeding steeds, and flags, and cloven  
mail.

And then we thought on vengeance, and, all along our van,  
‘Remember St. Bartholomew!’ was passed from man to man.  
But out spake gentle Henry, ‘No Frenchman is my foe:  
Down, down with every foreigner, but let your brethren go!’”

The defeated League soon began to break up in disputes among its members. Moderate men of all parties came to rally round Henry, when he showed his fitness as well as his right to be king. Then, as the best way of giving peace to his country, he agreed to become a Catholic, and was at last allowed to enter Paris as its master. It seems a blot on Henry’s character that he changed his religion for the sake of wearing his crown unquestioned. But though to satisfy the majority he called himself a Catholic, he showed no such bigotry as was then too common with all churches. He issued the celebrated Edict of Nantes, granting the Huguenots freedom in holding their own religion. This Catholic king even became known as the protector of Protestantism in Europe, against Philip of Spain and the house of Austria,

whose policy was to support the power of Rome by force and persecution.

After the death of Philip and Elizabeth of England, Henry stood up as the greatest sovereign in Europe. He had faults as a man, but he made a good king, who tried to rule firmly and justly and to benefit his people. A well-known saying of his is that he wanted every Frenchman "to have a fowl in the pot every Sunday"; and this care for the poor made his memory dear to his subjects for many a day, when his faults were forgotten. In his lifetime, too, he became popular with the mass of the nation, to whom he had given peace at home; yet by some he was always hated—the violent Catholics, whose domination he had overthrown, and the extreme Protestants, who thought he had betrayed them by turning Catholic.

More than one attempt had been made to assassinate him, when, in A.D. 1610, such a crime proved successful. As the king was driving through the narrow streets of Paris, a wretched fanatic, perhaps a lunatic, leant into his coach and stabbed him to death, to the grief and consternation of his people.

### Gustavus Adolphus

A.D. 1594-1632

About a hundred years after the Reformation there began another struggle between the Catholics and the Protestants of Germany, known as the Thirty Years war (A.D. 1618-48). In this long war the Catholic ruler of Austria tried to turn his now nominal title of emperor into a real authority, and to put down Protestantism by force as Charles V had failed to do. On the other side

stood the princes of North Germany, helped by foreign powers; not only by the Protestant Swedes, but by the Catholic French, whose jealousy of Austrian dominion was stronger than their religious zeal. The beginning of the quarrel had been the election of a Protestant prince as king of Bohemia, who married an English princess, daughter of James I; but that poor-spirited sovereign was not the man to back up his son-in-law, and England took hardly any part in the war.

The principal generals of the emperor were Tilly and Wallenstein, who in the first campaigns marched triumphantly here and there over Germany, causing terrible sufferings to the inhabitants of both parties. Most of their soldiers were adventurers, often half-savages, enlisted from many countries, who cared not so much about religion or duty as for plunder and bloodshed, and would readily change sides if they saw a better chance of pay and booty. Whichever side such men were on, they made nothing of robbing and ill-using the poor country-people so cruelly that often whole districts were destroyed, the villages burned, the cattle killed, the fields strewn with unburied bodies, the dogs running wild, and the land turned into a wilderness, where the soldiers themselves were sometimes like to starve when they had eaten their horses and dogs. In this dreadful war, it is believed that half or even two-thirds of the German people perished by sword, famine, or pestilence.

For a time the Protestant princes got the worst of it, and it seemed as if the emperor would master all Germany. But the fortune of war was changed when Gustavus Adolphus, king of Sweden, came forward as the Protestant champion. Sweden was a greater country then than it is now, holding provinces on the south side

of the Baltic which were afterwards taken by Russia. Its famous king was not only a pious man, but a brave and skilful general of well-disciplined soldiers, whom he would not allow to rob or ill-use the country people, but who loved and honoured their strict commander, since he led them on to victory. Foreigners came from other countries to serve under such a leader, and especially were there many Scotsmen among the Protestant hero's troops.

In 1630 Gustavus Adolphus landed in Pomerania with a small but veteran army. He was not at first very heartily received by the princes he came to deliver, some of them suspecting that he meant to make himself master of Germany. But next year a blow to their cause helped to unite them. Magdeburg, in Saxony, one of the chief Protestant cities, was taken by Tilly, and so cruelly treated as to shock even that age, when the peaceful inhabitants of captured cities were looked on as fair game for the brutality of excited soldiers. Magdeburg was almost entirely destroyed, men, women, and children being butchered in the burning streets, even in the churches, till of its thirty-five thousand people not a sixth part remained alive.

Gustavus Adolphus had not been able to succour Magdeburg in time; but soon his army, increased by German forces, marched to meet Tilly, whom he completely defeated near Leipsic. Now the Protestant princes rallied round him, and he made his way to the Rhine and into South Germany, turning the tables on the emperor. But, so long as he lived, he would not let his men pillage the conquered lands, and he allowed the Catholics the same freedom as he won for the Protestants.

This king's career in Germany was as short as it was

glorious. After winning several battles, he encountered Wallenstein, the emperor's greatest general, who pushed him back to Saxony. There, at the end of A.D. 1632, was fought the battle of Lützen, in which Gustavus Adolphus fell, lost in a heap of mangled corpses. He had the misfortune of being short-sighted, and was shot through coming too near the enemy without being aware of it. The Swedes, who had been driven back, were so enraged by the death of their beloved chief, that they again rushed to the attack, and the sun set upon a scene of desperate slaughter, in which it could hardly be said which army had won, both being too much exhausted to force the other off the field.

Wallenstein, indeed, retreated, abandoning his artillery, so that the Protestants could claim the victory. But the loss of their leader was worse than a defeat. After his death, their party lost heart in Germany, though the struggle was continued under Duke Bernard of Weimar, while Wallenstein, who had been plotting to go over to the other side, came to be treacherously murdered. The war was chiefly kept up by the Swedes and by the French under their famous generals Turenne and Condé. Not till A.D. 1648 was it ended by the peace of Westphalia.

Nothing but loss came to Germany from this ruinous conflict. For years after peace was made among its princes their states remained infested by bands of robbers, either discharged soldiers or peasants whose homes had been destroyed; and it was long before the country got over its miseries. The emperor had utterly failed to establish his power beyond his hereditary dominions of Austria. The Protestants had their freedom, but were split up into many weak and poor states,

some so small that one could walk through them in an hour. The only gain fell to the foreign powers that had entered into the war. Sweden took part of Germany lying on the south side of the Baltic. France seized Alsace upon the Rhine, and added its German people to her dominions. Thus, while there were Germans living under different governments, there was no longer a German nation. Then, for a time, France became the greatest power in Europe.

### Louis XIV

A.D. 1638-1715

We saw how, with Henry IV, the House of Bourbon began to rule over France. It so happened that the next three kings of this family, Louis XIII, XIV, and XV, all came to the throne as little boys; then the last two lived so long that their reigns together extended over four generations—135 years. During this time, between their weakness when young and their folly and selfishness as grown men, they did so much harm to France that the nation was almost ruined, even while it passed for the greatest power in Europe. Not a little of its greatness it owed to clever ministers, like Cardinal Richelieu, who, in Louis XIII's time, made himself the real ruler of the country.

The most famous of these kings was Louis XIV, whose reign lasted for seventy-two years. His boyhood was much taken up with civil wars, as well as by wars abroad in which the young king had little to say. But when he grew old enough to manage for himself, Louis displayed a taste for magnificence and for conquest which cost his people dear, as it brought much misery on their

neighbours. The king's love of glory did not often drive him to face the hardships and perils of war himself; but while he lived at ease in his grand palaces, only now and then proudly showing himself off among his armies, he sent out able generals to kill, burn, and destroy in the Netherlands and the Rhine countries. The best of these generals was Marshal Turenne, who deserved a wiser master. At home, also, the king had gifted ministers, who might have managed his affairs better if he had left them alone. But both with generals and statesmen he liked to interfere, hindering them from doing their best, and taking for himself the credit of their successes, till his head was turned by vainglory.

So many enemies did Louis make by his unscrupulous ambition, that more than once several of the chief countries in Europe joined together in a league against him. Our Charles II behaved very basely in these disputes, letting himself be bribed to peace and selling Dunkirk, the last English possession in France, to raise money for his selfish pleasures. But when William of Orange won the crown of England, he stood out as head of the enemies of Louis, against whom he had already defended his own country, Holland. Later on, under Queen Anne, England joined another alliance to prevent Louis's grandson from becoming king of Spain, for fear lest these countries might be united under one too powerful crown. In this war of the Spanish Succession, as it was called, the Duke of Marlborough was the victorious English general, who, along with Prince Eugene of Savoy, commanding the Austrian armies, defeated the French at Blenheim (A.D. 1704), in Bavaria, and in other famous battles, of which the scene was chiefly the Low Countries that have so often been the fighting-ground of Europe.

In the end only a few provinces on the eastern frontier remained to Louis out of his conquests, while he had impoverished his own people, and kept his neighbours from peacefully attending to their affairs, not to speak of myriads of men killed, thousands of families in misery, and hundreds of cities and villages ruined to gratify his pride. In youth his life had been selfish and sinful; then, when soured by defeats and disappointments, he turned in his old age to narrow-minded notions of religion, and thus was led to injure his country as well as by his wicked ambition. To please the priests and bigots who now got great influence over him, he repealed the Edict of Nantes, by which Henry IV had given the Huguenots freedom of conscience. For no other crime than belonging to this worship he persecuted the Protestants so harshly, that in the mountainous country of the Cevennes they took up arms against his troops. All over France, hundreds of thousands of its most worthy and useful people were driven into exile, many of them settling in England, at Spitalfields in London, for instance, where they set up the silk-weaving industry that was so much loss to France and gain to England. Few rulers of that day understood how it is work and trade that make nations prosperous, as wars make them poor. When Louis stood at the height of his renown, every tenth Frenchman, it was calculated, had been brought to beggary.

The French, dazzled by this king's splendid ways of living, called him "the great monarch", and looked upon him almost as an idol. But by and by they found out what such kingship cost them; and when Louis XIV died, A.D. 1715, he himself confessed, "I loved war too well". Two generations of his descendants having died

before him, he was succeeded by his great-grandson, Louis XV, a child who also grew up to be a bad king, caring little what became of the nation, so long as he could get the means of wasteful luxury. Thus the sufferings and poverty of France grew unbearable, till at last the people rose in the terrible outbreak of the French Revolution, when, resolving to have no more kings, they beheaded Louis XVI, who yet was the least harmful of all the Louis, and not so much to blame for the afflictions of their country.

### John Sobieski at Vienna

A.D. 1683

In Louis XIV's days the Turks for the last time appeared as the bugbear of Europe. This once warlike people had been growing idle and effeminate, as has always been the way with Eastern conquerors; but still from the Bosphorus they sent out armies to ravage and destroy in Hungary, Poland, and other countries on their frontier, where at this day old farmhouses may be seen huddled together for protection, and the very churches have sometimes been built like forts to be defended against Turkish attacks.

Two or three years before the death of our Charles II, Hungarian rebels sought the aid of the Turks against their sovereign, the Austrian emperor. Under the Grand Vizier, Kara Mustapha, a huge Turkish army, including Tartars from Asia and disloyal Christians, moved into Austria, their march marked by pillars of smoke from burning villages. The emperor had no force able to oppose them; and without serious resistance they reached the walls of his capital, Vienna.

Vienna was bravely defended by the small Austrian army; but the Turks blew up its walls by means of mines; and it seemed as if the city must fall a prey to that half-savage host, its inhabitants to be slaughtered or dragged off into slavery. But just as they were giving themselves up for lost, on the hills above the Danube appeared the banners of an army gathered for their relief by John Sobieski, king of Poland, already famous as a champion against the Turks. Poles, Germans, and some Frenchmen had all for once joined together to drive back that common enemy; for amid their own quarrels, the Christian nations might well shudder to hear how their old foe was pushing into the heart of Europe.

In separate columns this host came pouring down like torrents from the hills, driving back the Turkish outposts before them, till towards the end of the day they stood ranked in a semicircle upon the Danube plain. The Turks, double their numbers, were drawn up to face them, behind entrenchments bristling with cannon, where the Grand Vizier believed that he could despise his assailants, weary as they would be after their hasty and difficult march.

The sun was near its setting by the time that all the Christian troops reached their places, and their artillery had not yet come up. But at the sight of the enemy they forgot their fatigue, and were ready to rush forward, burning with religious zeal. Sobieski himself led them on, making for the gorgeous crimson tent of the Grand Vizier, the sight of which appeared to excite him as a red cloth does a bull. The garrison of Vienna had sallied out from their walls to take part in the fight; and already clouds of dust, raised by strings of camels, showed

how the Turks were trying to carry off their booty in the rear.

Then happened what was taken for an omen. In the evening sky was visible an eclipse of the moon, and its crescent, emblem of the Turkish faith, grew pale above the heads of both armies. That sight inspired the Christian charge, while it struck dismay to the Turks. "Heaven is against us!" was their cry, as they gave way on all sides, falling and flying before the Polish lancers. In an hour that mighty host was scattered under the walls of Vienna, at the end of the very day on which it had almost fallen into their hands.

The proud Grand Vizier burst into tears when he tried in vain to rally his troops. He had to take to flight like the rest, escaping under cover of darkness. The whole of his magnificent camp, with hundreds of cannon, thousands of tents, and great flocks of cattle, remained as spoil to the victors. Thirty or forty thousand Turks were killed in this battle, which delivered the empire for ever from the dread of them.

### Peter the Great

A.D. 1672-1725

Russia, the largest country in Europe, had been little heard of in history till the end of the seventeenth century, when its czar or emperor, Peter, set himself the task of making it into a great nation. This prince succeeded to his throne as a boy, but for some years was kept in the background by his sister, one of several masterful women who at different times have ruled Russia. She purposely neglected Peter's education, wishing him to grow up ignorant and

worthless, so that she might have all her own way. But the boy was full of curiosity, which helped him to knowledge. By talking with foreigners who had found their way to Russia, he learned how far its people were behind the other nations of Europe; and while playing with the village lads given him as companions, he made up his mind to improve both himself and the state of his country. In this design he was encouraged by a Swiss tutor, who became one of his trusted counsellors in the work of raising Russia out of its half-Asiatic barbarity.

At the age of seventeen Peter was able to turn his sister out of power, and to make himself czar in fact as in name. Henceforth he gave himself up to his plans for civilizing and strengthening Russia. He had great difficulties to meet, since most of the Russians did not care to be civilized, sticking obstinately rather to their own ways and customs; but they soon found in Peter a master who could drive them into progress. More than once he had to put down revolts, as he did with a cruel severity that made the side of his character best understood by this people.

The most celebrated story in Peter's life is the journey he made through Europe, with the view of learning the secret of other countries' prosperity, and especially the art of ship-building, by which Russia might become a naval power. Near Amsterdam, in Holland, is still shown the mean hut in which he lived, disguised as a sailor, and working with his own hands in the dock-yards. Thence he passed over to England, taking the same lessons from the ship-builders at Deptford, near Greenwich; and, after some months' stay in London, he carried back to Russia several hun-

dreds of English engineers, surgeons, artisans, and all sorts of craftsmen, to teach his own people.

No sooner had Peter learned how to build a fleet, than an army turned out to be his first need. In the first year of the eighteenth century Russia was invaded by its neighbour, Charles XII of Sweden, who easily beat the czar's ill-disciplined troops in one battle after another. But from every defeat Peter went on learning, till at last his soldiers had been beaten into such training that they could defeat the Swedes. With the Turks, at the other end of his empire, Peter had already made war, taking from them the port of Azov, on the Black Sea; and on the Baltic he now extended his coast-line by conquests from Sweden.

Even in the middle of these wars the czar pushed on his designs for making Russia a great maritime nation. Its capital was the ancient city of Moscow, in the heart of the country, till Peter founded a new one, called Petersburg, or St. Petersburg, built on the Neva, a river flowing into the Gulf of Finland. In choosing this site he did not show much wisdom, for the ground was so marshy and unhealthy that 100,000 men are said to have died in building the new city. Such a task could hardly have been carried out but by a despot, who drove hordes of poor peasants to work for him whether they would or no, as the pyramids of Egypt were built by the labour of slaves. But the czar was not a man to be hindered in his plans by the sufferings of his people; and at any cost of life and money he forced on the building of what came to be one of the handsomest cities in Europe.

Having successfully ended his wars, Peter paid another visit to Europe, this time to France, where he



PETER THE GREAT AT DEPTFORD DOCKYARD (see page 157)

From the picture by Daniel Maclise, R.A.



showed himself now with all the pride of a great sovereign, though still he was always ready to pick up information that might be of use to his own nation. He sent out young Russians to travel and study that they might teach their countrymen, and he encouraged foreigners to settle in Russia as instructors of its ignorance. In our time, much of the same policy has been adopted by Japan, so as in one generation to make itself the strongest country of Asia, by lessons taken from Europe.

Peter the Great was a strange mixture of bad and good. With all his zeal for progress and enlightenment, he remained half-savage in his habits and brutal in his temper. The best of tempers, indeed, might well be spoiled by the temptation of being an absolute ruler, able to take his own way over a pig-headed people, with whom violence was the best argument. He turned off his wife because she did not sympathize with his civilizing activity; and for the same reason he disinherited his only son, who is believed to have been tortured to death by his command. But this despot, giving way to violent fits of passion and cruelty when he found his wishes opposed, was also capable of noble and humane actions. He met his death (A.D. 1725) through bravely helping to save a shipwrecked crew in very severe winter weather; and that is only one of the tales told to the credit of a masterful ruler, who certainly raised his country to a new rank in the world.

**Charles XII**

A.D. 1682-1718

While Peter the Great was building up Russia, his neighbour, Charles XII of Sweden, made much noise in Europe by a career of useless victory that caused him to be compared to Alexander the Great. In his early years Charles showed himself brave, proud, and wilful, fond of dangerous sports, such as hunting bears with no other weapon than a forked stick and a net to catch them alive, while as yet no one suspected his genius for war to be as great as his rash courage. He was not so fond of books, but let himself be provoked to learn Latin when told that other kings understood this language; then he soon loved to read about battles and conquests, and began to thirst for such glory as Alexander had won so young.

By the death of his father, Charles became king at fifteen. At that time he was taken for a thoughtless boy, even by his own subjects; and his jealous neighbours saw now a chance to humiliate the power Sweden had gained in the days of Gustavus Adolphus. The Czar Peter, the King of Poland, and the King of Denmark made a league against the young king; and the Danes had actually invaded Sweden. His chief counsellors were for giving in to such powerful enemies, when Charles astonished everyone by his resolute and able conduct. Embarking an army, he sailed to the attack of Copenhagen, he himself being the first man to leap ashore, up to the waist in water, under a hail of bullets. It was in A.D. 1700, when he was only eighteen, that he left his capital, Stockholm, on this

campaign, and he never returned to it, nearly all the rest of his life being spent in foreign countries.

By this daring general in his teens the Danes were quickly forced to peace. He then turned to attack the czar in what are now the north-west provinces of Russia. With an army of not 10,000 men he stormed the Russian camp at Narva, killing and taking prisoners more than half Peter's ill-disciplined soldiers, seven times as numerous as his own. Next year he marched against Poland, whose king was also ruler of Saxony, and had a strong army both of Germans and Poles. But in battle after battle they were beaten by the youthful general, whose name soon grew famous over Europe; then Charles forced the Poles to depose their Saxon king and appoint a new one chosen by himself.

He had still to fight the Russians and the Saxons, whom he always defeated during several years spent in marching here and there through his enemies' country. At last, made too bold by constant success, he set out to attack Moscow, the old capital of Russia. But now fortune no longer favoured his audacity. Peter's soldiers had been taught by their defeats how to fight better. The winter was so terribly severe that 2000 of Charles's men were frozen to death. In his rapid marches he had to leave his cannon behind. His supplies were cut off by the Russians, and instead of making straight for Moscow, he turned south into the province of Russia called the Ukraine, there to join the rebel Cossack chief, Mazeppa, a name well known from the thrilling ordeal of his young days, when a merciless enemy had bound him naked on horseback, and driven him out into a wilderness to be chased by wolves.

After nine years of victory, Charles's rashness brought

upon him a crushing defeat. At the siege of Pultava he was so severely wounded in the heel that it was feared his leg must be cut off. While not able to stand or ride, he found himself attacked by Peter so vigorously that the brave Swedish army was altogether destroyed. The king, with a small body of his guards, managed to pass the Dnieper into Turkish territory; but most of the fugitives, unable to get across this river, had to surrender, and were barbarously sent off to the cold wilds of Siberia.

The battle of Pultava was in A.D. 1709. For some years to come Charles remained in Turkey, stirring up the sultan to make war on Peter. But the Turks did not show much activity against that old enemy of theirs; and they soon grew tired of a troublesome and expensive guest like the Swedish king, who behaved as masterfully as if he were in his own country. They resolved to get rid of him, but found this no easy task, for Charles with his guards fiercely defended himself against a large force; and even when made a prisoner at Adrianople, he did not give up his hopes of leading a Turkish army against Moscow.

The Swedes meanwhile, in the absence of their king, were carrying on the war unsuccessfully both by land and sea. When Charles heard that his people proposed to make peace with his enemies, he suddenly made up his mind to leave Turkey, as he should have done long before. Travelling *incognito*, that is, as a private person, across Europe, in A.D. 1714 he appeared among his troops in Pomerania, part of which still belonged to Sweden. But now the Prussians had joined his old adversaries, the Russians, Danes, and Saxons; and next year he was driven across the Baltic into his own

kingdom, which he had not visited for nearly half his lifetime.

All Europe now supposed this fiery conqueror to be extinguished, when once more he amazed the world by invading Norway. He had a scheme for making an alliance with Peter against his other assailants; and so eager was he for fresh fields of action, that he thought of landing in Britain to help the exiled Stuarts back to their throne, though Britain was the only great power that had helped him in his struggle against heavy odds. But his bold projects were cut short by a ball that killed him while besieging the Norwegian fortress, Frederikshall. The Swedes felt not sorry to be free from such a restless and pugnacious king, who had cost Sweden the loss of nearly all her foreign conquests; and what poor Charles got from a wandering life of dazzling victories and daring adventures, was that he—

“Left a name at which the world grew pale,  
To point a moral and adorn a tale”.

### **Frederick the Great**

A.D. 1712-1786

In Charles XII's time a new kingdom was rising up in Europe, that ended by growing to be the chief German power. This was Prussia, originally a flat, poor country between Germany and Poland, whose princes were formerly styled Electors of Brandenburg, the province in which stands their capital, Berlin. At the end of the seventeenth century one of these princes, known as the Great Elector, managed so much to increase his dominions,

that in A.D. 1700 his son Frederick came to be crowned as king of Prussia.

The heir of Frederick I was Frederick William, who married the daughter of our George I. This extraordinary character, coarse, ill-tempered, and miserly, had very decided notions about his duties as a ruler. He managed to keep out of wars; but his chief care was to form a strong army, trained by harsh discipline, and to lay by money, which has been well called the sinews of war. He drilled the whole nation to obedience and dutifulness, while he set an example of despising the arts, learning, and good manners as useless ornaments of a state. He had a mania for collecting tall men in his bodyguard; and almost his only extravagance was on Goliaths of seven feet high or so, who, by fair means or foul, could be enlisted into this giant battalion. He not only gathered such prodigies of stature from among his own subjects, but had agents to look out for them in other countries, from which men unlucky enough to be tall were sometimes deceitfully enticed or cruelly kidnapped to serve among the Prussian king's big toy-soldiers.

There was little love lost between this queer king and his eldest son, the crown-prince, afterwards known as Frederick the Great. The boy showed a taste for music, poetry, and other accomplishments despised by his father as effeminate. Frederick William tried to drill his family as he did his army, and made nothing of kicking, beating, and abusing the poor prince when he seemed not likely to turn out a good soldier. Frederick's life was made so miserable by such treatment that as a young man he tried to run away in disguise out of Prussia. Being caught, he was brought to trial as a

deserter, and his brutal father could hardly be kept from having him executed, as was the fate of a friend who had helped him in that attempt at flight. After a strict imprisonment the crown-prince was allowed a little more freedom, keeping as much as possible out of his father's way, and in secret gratifying his literary tastes. Though a German prince, he read and wrote in French by preference, and had a great admiration for Voltaire and other famous authors in that language, whom he tried to imitate with more diligence than success.

But when in A.D. 1740 Frederick succeeded his father as king, it soon appeared that after all he was to be more celebrated as a soldier than as an author or a patron of science. His harsh education had not improved a character naturally cold and suspicious; and though he had sometimes generous impulses, Frederick turned out as selfish a tyrant as his rough father. His first exploit was to lead the army, so carefully drilled by Frederick William, against his neighbour, Maria Theresa.

This princess, daughter of the Emperor Charles VI, had, in the same year as Frederick came to his kingdom, succeeded to her father's dominions, under the title of Queen of Hungary; and later on, her husband was made emperor. Other greedy princes tried to rob her, taking advantage of her helplessness; and Frederick for his part swooped down upon her province of Silesia. He gave so little promise of his talents as a general that he ran away in his first battle, believing himself defeated when it was really a victory; but he soon showed himself able to make up for that blunder, and his army overran Silesia. Maria Theresa threw herself on the loyalty of her Hungarian subjects, who bravely rose to

her defence; then, with the help of Britain, she was able to drive out her enemies, except Frederick. He succeeded in keeping the greater part of Silesia, that has ever since belonged to Prussia.

After this unchivalrous conquest, Frederick for some years had peace to improve his country and to gratify his turn for letters. But his military success had stirred up much ill-feeling; and several of the chief European powers secretly joined together to humiliate him. Being aware of their designs, Frederick thought best to take the offensive by attacking Saxony, the nearest to him of the allies. Thus began the famous Seven Years' war (A.D. 1756-63), in which Prussia had to fight hard for her existence. Britain this time was on her side; but against them stood France, Russia, Sweden, and several of the chief German states, besides the Austria-Hungary empire, eager to be revenged for the loss of Silesia.

In this war Frederick showed himself the greatest general of his time, able to hold his own under difficulties that would have crushed a weaker man and a less stubborn people. Over and over again the king won great battles, beating the Austrians at Prague, the French at Rossbach, the Russians at Zorndorf, only to have to turn against some fresh army on another side. Sometimes he and his generals were beaten; but always he managed to face his foes again; and when they thought they had him in a trap, he would break away to gather new strength for falling upon some weak point of the hostile armies.

Prussia suffered terribly in this war. Its provinces were overrun by enemies; the capital was taken; the country was impoverished; and it was all Frederick could do to find soldiers and money to pay them. But





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FREDERICK THE GREAT ON THE BATTLEFIELD OF LÜTZEN

From the painting by Adolf von Menzel

when his fortunes were at their darkest there came a break in the clouds. The Empress Elizabeth of Russia dying, her successor, Peter III, went over to fight for Frederick. Sweden, too, dropped off from the alliance against him. The French found they had their hands full in fighting a British and German army under Ferdinand, duke of Brunswick, that did good service on Frederick's side. All parties grew tired of the war, till at last only Austria and Prussia were left in arms against each other; then, exhausted by the struggle, they also made peace, winning and losing nothing after seven years of battles that had cost the lives of nearly a million men, besides untold misery to countless homes. The only power that had gained much was Britain, which now showed herself supreme at sea, and conquered from France what came to be our Indian Empire and the Dominion of Canada.

The rest of Frederick's life could be spent in letting his country recover from this sore ordeal, brought upon it by his ambition. Its trials hardened Prussia into a vigorous nation, which by and by would be the core of a new power, binding together the weak and disunited German states. From that time Prussia became the rival of Austria for supremacy in Germany, a struggle that ended in our own day by Frederick's descendant, William I, being crowned emperor.

### Washington

A.D. 1732-1799

None of the kings and generals of this time seems so truly great as George Washington, whose own wish would have been to pass his life quietly as a farmer and

land-surveyor, which was his profession. Born in the colony of Virginia, a British subject, as a young man he served with our army against the French and Indians; then, later on, his duty was to fight and beat British armies. We may well be sorry that such a man came to fight against us, but that need not prevent us from admiring his heroism in what he believed a just cause.

Most of America had been shared out among different nations of Europe, so that the loss of their colonies across the Atlantic belongs to European history. Nearly all the south continent belonged to Spain and Portugal; while North America was mainly settled by French and English colonists. Our colonies, thirteen in number, lying along the east coast, had long wars with their French neighbours, whose chief settlements were about the River St. Lawrence and the great lakes of Canada. The end of much fighting was that we conquered Canada (A.D. 1760).

When thus the English colonists no longer needed Britain's help against the French, they fell into a quarrel with our government. As usual in quarrels, the right was not all on one side; but we were much in the wrong by a way we had of treating our colonies as if they must always be tied to the mother-country's apron-strings, when they were growing big enough to look after their own affairs. The chief point of dispute was that Britain wanted her American subjects to pay their share of the expense of fighting the French, which seems fair enough; but the colonists refused to pay taxes so long as they had no representatives in parliament, which also was not unfair. These were chips of the old block, as the saying is, who only followed our example in standing up for their own rights.

Some of the wisest men in England spoke out against

the stupid and obstinate way in which the American colonies were governed. A good many of the colonists were on the whole satisfied with our government. But among the majority the ill-feeling grew so strong that it came to blows. We sent troops to America to put down the rebels, who were not to be put down so easily as we had expected. Under a parliament of their own, entitled a Congress (A.D. 1776), the colonies proclaimed themselves independent, and raised an army of which Washington was made general. His state, Virginia, was the chief of the colonies that took a leading part in this movement, while the first fighting was round about Boston, the chief place of the northern states called New England.

Thus began an unhappy war that lasted for seven years, sometimes one side getting the better and sometimes the other. At first the British had the advantage in experienced generals, regular soldiers, and supplies of arms and ammunition brought by sea. The American army, on the other side, was ill-disciplined and ill-equipped, often half-starved and left without pay. The colonies were rather jealous of each other. The soldiers were not always obedient to their officers, nor the officers loyal to their commander, till he had showed them how fit he was for command. What chiefly kept them together was the patience, caution, and courage of Washington, who now turned to good account his experience in perilous frontier wars with the Red Indians, when he had led the Virginian militia.

After a time the Americans were assisted by the French troops, their old enemies, sent to help them against Britain. The British government, on its side, hired German soldiers to fight in America, and this, as

well as its harsh treatment of prisoners of war, helped to make the mother-country hateful to its sons across the Atlantic. Washington went on teaching his ragged and discontented army to be good soldiers, so that they began to win instead of losing battles; then twice a British army suffered the disgrace of having to surrender to the enemy they had once despised.

After losing fifty thousand men and much money, Britain grew tired of the struggle, and (A.D. 1783) agreed to let her American colonies set up for themselves as the "United States", that have since grown into such a great republic. For their flag they took a pattern of thirteen stars and stripes, one for every state in the Union, to which number another star has been added for each of the many new states taken in from time to time, till now there are about fifty of them stretching right across the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific, besides island dependencies. It was arranged that each state, often as large as a country in Europe, should make its own laws, all being united as one national government in the Federal Republic, whose head is a president elected for four years by the whole people.

The first president was Washington, whose noble character had come to be recognized by all his fellow-countrymen. He was re-elected for a second term of four years; but after that retired into private life, to die universally mourned and respected. When a capital was built for the young republic it was called by his name, Washington. American children are taught to reverence his memory as the greatest man of the continent; and in Britain, too, as all over the world, he is famed as a brave, wise, and unselfish hero, who did more than any other man to establish a new nation, while

he never sought his own glory or profit, as too many great soldiers have done in troubled times.

The part of North America that remained to Britain was Canada, which we have treated more sensibly and justly, so as to keep it as a loyal colony. Sooner or later the other European colonies all over America followed the example of the United States, in making themselves independent, and setting up as republics under such names as Mexico, Brazil, Chile, the Argentine States, &c. But none of them has been so fortunate and prosperous as the United States; and all of them have suffered much from civil wars, because among their quarrelsome and ambitious generals and presidents they have not found men like Washington to take a lead and set a copy of pure-minded patriotism.

### Kosciusko

A.D. 1746-1817

After fighting so fiercely with each other, Frederick the Great and Maria Theresa joined together in their later days to rob their unfortunate neighbour, Poland. This ancient kingdom, lying chiefly in the flat basin of the Vistula, had fallen into a wretched state through the quarrelsome ness of its proud nobles, whose idea of freedom was submitting to no authority. Their king, instead of being hereditary as in other countries, was elected by the nobles, who as often as not chose some foreign prince, to be obeyed only so far as it pleased them. The last king of Poland, Stanislas Poniatowski, was a Pole, raised to the crown by the influence of the Russian empress, Catherine the Great. This unscrupulous sovereign had interfered in the affairs of the country, even stirring up

its disorders, as an excuse for a covetous scheme to annex it, annexing being a fine word for what in ordinary life would be called stealing. She persuaded Prussia and Austria to join her in such a design; and, A.D. 1772, each of these powers laid hands on a part of Poland, while what was left nominally free became dominated by Russia, with the weak king a puppet in Catherine's hands. The only power that tried to help Poland against this spoliation was its old enemy Turkey, which itself had fallen into decay, and could not resist Russia.

That first partition of Poland, as it was called, did not bring peace to the country; and, about twenty years later, Russia and Prussia took advantage of its disorders to seize each on another slice of territory. Then the Poles rose in a desperate revolt, watched with much sympathy in France and Britain, which by this time had troubles enough of their own through the wars brought on by the French Revolution. The leader of the Polish patriots was not their king, but Kosciusko, a brave nobleman who had served under Washington in the war that made the United States independent of Britain. Kosciusko's followers fought gallantly, but were overpowered by the Russian forces under their celebrated general, Suwarow. The final combat took place about a suburb of the capital Warsaw, when half the defenders were slain or drowned in trying to get across the Vistula.

“In vain, alas! in vain, ye gallant few,  
From rank to rank your volleyed thunder flew. . . .  
Hope, for a season, bade the world farewell,  
And Freedom shrieked—as Kosciusko fell.”

So our poet Campbell expressed the helpless indignation with which feeling hearts saw Poland crushed beneath

the strength of its oppressors. The king became a pensioner of Russia, and the main part of the country was treated as a Russian province. The hero Kosciusko, severely wounded, was taken prisoner, but after a time set free, and allowed to spend his old age quietly in Switzerland, which has often made a refuge for exiled patriots of other countries. His body was brought to be buried at Cracow, the capital of Austrian Poland, where, as monument to him, has been raised a high mound of earth from the chief Polish battle-fields.

In A.D. 1795, after Kosciusko's defeat, Poland was all divided between those three masterful neighbours, its name being wiped out of the list of nations. Russia took the lion's share of the prey, and has ruled most harshly over what is still called the Kingdom of Poland, where every effort was made to turn the people into Russians. But the Poles have never forgotten how they were formerly a famous people, and more than once in the last century they tried to win back their freedom, by insurrections that ended only by throwing them more under the power of Russia.

### Napoleon Bonaparte

A.D. 1769-1804

Among the many conquerors in history, none was more extraordinary than Napoleon Bonaparte, who, about a hundred years ago, made himself master of France, then of almost all Europe. He was born in Corsica, just a year after this Italian island became a French possession; but for which the most famous of all Frenchmen would have remained an Italian. As it was, he grew up a subject of France, and entered the French army as an artillery officer.

This was the time of the great Revolution, when France rose against the oppression of her kings and nobles. At first it seemed as if a freer government would be peacefully and happily set up; but the French patriots, unused to freedom, fell to quarrelling with each other and with their king, Louis XVI, a well-meaning but not a very wise man, who, according to the new arrangement, was to rule them henceforth as a constitutional monarch like the kings of England. Poor Louis, kept almost as a captive in Paris, tried to run away, but was caught and brought back, to be more and more cried down by the people, who began to hate him when the princes of Europe made war against France for his deliverance. His palace was attacked by an angry mob, and the king being too soft-hearted to defend himself as he might have done, he and all his family were shut up in prison by the violent party that now took a lead in the Revolution. Both king and queen came out only to be beheaded, like our Charles I; then their young son, the Dauphin, died in cruel confinement.

The French now seemed to go mad in their enthusiasm for Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, the watchwords of the Revolution, which for its flag took the red, white, and blue tricolour, instead of the white standard and golden lilies of the Bourbons. France was proclaimed a Republic, in which all citizens were to be equal and brotherly. But it is easier to talk about freedom than to learn the duties of free citizens. Fine words did not hinder the country from being really given over to one set of tyrants after another, put in power by the mob of Paris, that would presently turn against its old favourites and allow them to be executed



Photo, Braun, Clemont et Cie.

1814

"1814": MEISSONIER'S FAMOUS PAINTING OF NAPOLEON AND HIS ARMY ON THE MARCH

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or massacred. Anyone accused of being a royalist, or of not loving the bloodthirsty Republic, was thrown into prison. Then, every day, batches of these victims, after a mere pretence at trial, were carted through the streets to have their heads cut off by a machine called the guillotine, now introduced into France instead of the gallows and other cruel forms of execution.

In other parts of the country, as well as in Paris, horrible crimes were committed in the name of liberty. Amid the general madness, good and wise men could only hold their tongues, and be thankful if they escaped suspicion. The king's brothers and many of the nobles had contrived to escape abroad, where most of them had to live for years in poverty. Some joined the foreign armies that now marched to attack France. But while accusing and killing each other so fiercely, the French bravely defended their frontiers, and let the kings of Europe know that they meant to manage their own affairs.

The Reign of Terror, as the worst of this cruel time was called, came to an end with the overthrow and execution of Robespierre, the most fanatically cruel of the popular tyrants. Then France, sick of bloodshed, began to settle down under the government of a Convention, or kind of parliament elected from all over the country. Once more the foolish mob of Paris, along with many of the undisciplined citizen militia called national guards, attempted to overturn this government. But now the authorities placed a few thousand soldiers under young General Bonaparte, who had already distinguished himself in attacking Toulon when it was in the hands of the British. He soon showed how the right man had been chosen for command. In a street

fight he easily scattered the mob, disarmed the revolted national guards, and brought Paris to order (A.D. 1795), after six years of sanguinary tumults that might have been cut short at first if the weak king had trusted such a leader.

After this service, Napoleon Bonaparte was put at the head of an army for attacking the Austrians in Italy. Here the young general sprang into fame by winning one battle after another against experienced officers and veteran soldiers. The Italian princes hastened to make peace with France, to which Austria was obliged to give up her possessions in Lombardy and the Netherlands. Other French generals having been less successful in Germany, the victorious Bonaparte became not only the idol of his soldiers but popular with the nation whom he had saved from invasion.

Only one power now stood out against France, and that was her old enemy Britain. Napoleon, eager for fresh conquests, had the romantic idea of attacking the British empire in India. As a step towards this, he led an expedition to Egypt, where he easily beat its Turkish masters on land, but the fleet that accompanied him was destroyed by Nelson in the famous battle of the Nile. The French general next invaded Syria; and here found himself checked by a band of British sailors, who defended against him the old Crusaders' stronghold of Acre. When he saw there was no more glory to be won in the East, he deserted his army and secretly went back to France. All along this great soldier showed himself dishonourable and self-seeking, more concerned about his own interest than about his duty or his country's good.

By this time the French had grown tired of their

latest government, with five Directors at the head of it. Bonaparte took advantage of his popularity to upset the Directory by force, and to establish a new constitution under three Consuls, of whom he was chief, and practically the ruler of France. Austria and her allies having taken courage to begin the war again, the First Consul won new triumphs which so dazzled his countrymen that he could have all his own way with them. Crossing the Alps by a difficult march, he suddenly appeared in Italy and completely defeated the Austrians there. In Germany also they were routed by another French general; and though the British fleet held the sea, and a British army drove the French out of Egypt, France was so successful on the Continent, that all the hostile powers were glad to make peace with her, A.D. 1802.

Bonaparte, soon proclaimed Consul for life, gave himself up for a time to restoring order and prosperity in France, torn to pieces as she was by the revolutionary madness. He let the exiles come back from foreign countries on condition of submitting to his government; he restored the Catholic Church, which had been abolished by the revolutionists, who, to change everything, had even introduced a new Calendar of months, with weeks of ten days; and in many ways he showed wisdom and energy in the use of his ill-gained authority. His chief work as a statesman was causing to be drawn up a body of legislation which made a great improvement on the old laws of France, where, under the name of the Code Napoleon, this is still the law of the country, and it has been adopted or imitated in other parts of Europe. Had he only been content to remain at peace, he might now have given France a firm and beneficent government.

But stronger than Napoleon's sense of justice was his

selfish ambition and his love of glory. Before long he picked a quarrel with Britain, and assembled a great army on the shores of the Channel for the invasion of our country, in which the French royal princes had taken refuge. The usurper was too prudent to call himself king, as he was in fact; but, having destroyed the freedom of which the French had made such an ill use, he tickled their vanity by reviving the empire given to Charlemagne, whom they liked to think of as a Frenchman, though he was rather a German. Charlemagne had gone to Rome to be crowned by the Pope; but Napoleon made the Pope come to Paris to crown him Emperor, as was done with great pomp, A.D. 1804, and thenceforth he ruled with more power than the old kings that had been so rashly got rid of by the French. In exchange, they had now a far more masterful sovereign, who, a strange mixture of greatness and meanness, of courage and cunning, was served with such devotion by the soldiers he so often led to victory, that he found himself able to force or cheat the French into giving up the freedom won by their revolutionary enthusiasm.

### Nelson

A.D. 1758-1805

Let us break off the life of Napoleon to see how, while he made himself master of the Continent, Britain remained mistress of the sea. To our brave sailors, at that day harshly treated, ill fed, and poorly rewarded, we owe it that we alone escaped invasion, except by one small French force landing in Ireland, which was soon forced to surrender, and by another still feebler attempt on the coast of Wales. In almost every sea-fight the

French ships were beaten, till they hardly durst venture out of their harbours, many of them indeed having been captured and turned into British men-of-war.

Among our naval commanders in this long war the most famous is Horatio Nelson. The son of a Norfolk rector, he was a delicate boy, and, though full of spirit, he seemed unfit for the rough life of the navy. Yet at the age of twelve or thirteen he went to sea with his uncle, captain of a man-of-war, afterwards making a voyage on a merchantman. Two or three years later he sailed on a perilous expedition to the Arctic regions, and had some exciting experience of such adventures as bear-hunting on the ice. His next cruise was to the hot East Indies, a British sailor having to be ready to face the climate of any quarter of the world.

This great sailor never became quite at home on the waves, for till the end, it is said, he would always be sea-sick at the beginning of a voyage. But he attended so well to his duty, that soon after getting out of his teens he was promoted from midshipman to lieutenant, and two years afterwards he rose to be captain of a frigate. His next service was in the West Indies and the Gulf of Mexico, where, in an expedition by land against the Spaniards, he had almost died of fever caught in the unhealthy forests and swamps of the tropics. A trip home cured him; then he got command of a larger vessel, in which one of his officers was the Duke of Clarence, afterwards William IV.

Now broke out the great war with France, and Nelson's ship was sent to Toulon, at the taking back of which from the British (A.D. 1793) Napoleon Bonaparte first distinguished himself. In one of his Mediterranean fights about this time Nelson lost an eye, but with the

other he kept such a sharp look-out that his name began to be the dread of French sailors. A little later, in an unsuccessful attack upon the island of Teneriffe, his right arm was carried away by a cannon-ball. Before this loss he had helped to win a great victory over the Spanish fleet off Cape St. Vincent, for his share in which Nelson was knighted and made a rear-admiral, not yet thirty years old.

When Napoleon set out on his expedition to Egypt, Sir Horatio Nelson was sent to catch him with a squadron, to which the French were able to give the slip. Before the days of steam, ships of course depended on favourable winds, which might fail them just at the nick of time; nor could they get news by telegraph of what was happening a thousand miles off. Nelson followed the enemy as well as he could, and, after a good deal of hunting about the Mediterranean, came upon the French fleet anchored in Aboukir Bay, between Alexandria and the western mouth of the Nile. The English admiral boldly sailed into the bay, dividing his force, and sending one half to sail between the shore and the French ships, which were thus taken between two fires. It was a fearful battle that raged at night, lit by the burning and blowing up of the French flagship, while the others were disabled and forced to strike their colours, only two escaping out to sea.

In this battle (A.D. 1798) the young admiral was again severely wounded. As reward, he was made Lord Nelson of the Nile, and henceforth became known as one of our most gallant commanders. Soon afterwards the title Duke of Bronte and a large estate in Sicily, still held by his heirs, were given him by the King of Naples for services not so creditable to a British officer. Like

some other brave men, he was too easily managed by women; and Lady Hamilton, the wife of our ambassador to Naples, had such bad influence on him as to lead him into meddling with the affairs of that ill-governed country in a way that makes a blot on his fame.

He next sailed to the Baltic to attack the fleets of the Northern powers, which Napoleon would have turned against Britain. In this expedition Nelson was under a senior admiral, who sent him forward with the lighter ships of the fleet to bombard Copenhagen; then, his commander making the signal of recall from what seemed a too dangerous exploit, it is said that Nelson put the telescope to his blind eye, and pretended not to see that order. Steering as near the harbour as possible, he opened such a fire on the Danish ships and batteries that the Danes submitted and gave up their fleet (A.D. 1801). Then it was:

“Of Nelson and the North  
Sing the glorious day’s renown!”

Our hero proved not so successful in attacking Boulogne, where Napoleon had begun preparations for his invasion of Britain. But soon came the peace of 1802, and Nelson retired to the village of Merton in Surrey. Next year the peace was broken by Napoleon’s restless ambition; then once more Britain flew to arms, every day expecting to be invaded by the troops of “Boney”, as the terrible French emperor was nicknamed. All eyes now turned to the one-eyed and one-armed admiral, not only the foremost sea-fighter of his time, but the darling of his sailors and the hope of the nation.

Put in command of the Mediterranean fleet, all Nelson

asked was to bring the combined French and Spanish ships to action. But they cautiously kept out of his reach, and at one time led him off on a wild-goose chase all the way to the West Indies. On coming back, the enemy kept safe in the harbour of Cadiz, till Napoleon, who knew nothing about naval battles, rashly goaded the French admiral out to sea. So at last, in October, 1805, Nelson met his enemy off Cape Trafalgar in the south-west corner of Spain.

The French and Spaniards together had more ships than made up our fleet; but the British, inspired by a long series of victories, felt themselves a match for far stronger forces. Famous is the signal which Nelson made on going into action: "England expects every man to do his duty!" And so well did his men do their duty, that more than half the enemy's ships were taken, while most of those that escaped had been battered into wrecks. But in the hottest of the fight, Nelson's ship, the *Victory*, being locked together with a French man-of-war, the admiral was mortally wounded by a ball. He had scorned to cover up the decorations of his rank, which made him a mark for riflemen in the enemy's mast-tops. Carried below, he died in the course of the day, but not till he heard of a glorious victory; and his last words were: "Thank God, I have done my duty!"

Thus cut down in the prime of his life, and the height of his fame, Nelson fell mourned and honoured by the nation he had served so well. His body was brought home to be buried in St. Paul's Cathedral. His ship, the *Victory*, which looks so strange beside our iron men-of-war, still lies in Portsmouth harbour as a memorial of our greatest naval hero. Many a tear was shed for a leader who had been not less kind than brave,



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### HORATIO VISCOUNT NELSON

After the picture in the Council Chamber of the City of London



at a time when naval discipline was often kept up by such brutal severity that our sailors must have had skins of leather as well as hearts of oak.

### The Emperor Napoleon

A.D. 1804-1821

The emperor never could carry out his scheme for invading Britain, where the whole nation was ready in arms to meet him, while our government kept on stirring up the kings of the Continent to renew the war against him. Even before his fleet had been ruined at Trafalgar he drew away his army from the coast, and marched off to fresh campaigns in Germany. Again he was amazingly victorious, entering Vienna as a conqueror, and defeating the allied Austrians and Russians at the glorious battle of Austerlitz, A.D. 1805.

His next war was with Prussia, which he humbled at Jena, A.D. 1806. A year later his troops suffered great losses in a winter campaign against Russia; but at the end, by the victory of Friedland, he forced the czar to make peace. At the same time he took away from Prussia the part of her dominions lying on the Rhine, which he formed into a new state called Westphalia, and made his youngest brother, Jerome, king of it. He had already given the kingdoms of Holland and Naples to other brothers of his, while on his successful generals he bestowed princedoms and dukedoms all over Europe, whose sovereigns seemed to hold their crowns only at his will.

To punish Britain, which now alone resisted his arms, the conqueror ordered all the ports of the Continent to be closed to our commerce. The subdued countries had

no choice but to obey. When Portugal stood out against this decree, Napoleon sent an army to seize Lisbon. About the same time, having got the Spanish king into his power, he forced him to abdicate, and made his own brother, Joseph, king of Spain. But the Spaniards rose in rebellion against this foreigner, and were helped by a British expedition to defeat the French. Then Napoleon came to Spain with a huge army, before which the British had to retreat to Corunna, and embark at this port after gaining a useless victory, with the loss of their general, Sir John Moore. But soon came another British army under the famous Wellington, that held itself in Spain and Portugal till the end of the war, gradually driving out the French from the Peninsula.

From Spain Napoleon was called away to Austria, once more taking courage to defy him. Again he entered Vienna, and defeated the Austrians at Wagram (A.D. 1809). The Emperor of Austria had already been obliged to give up his ancient title of Holy Roman Emperor; now the conqueror put upon him another humiliation. His wife, Josephine, not having any children to succeed him, Napoleon resolved to divorce her, and demanded the hand of the Archduchess Maria Louisa, daughter of that proudest throne in Europe. The Austrian emperor was in no position to refuse. Maria Louisa was married to the upstart Frenchman (A.D. 1810); and next year was born a son who received the title King of Rome, that had belonged to the old Emperors of Christendom.

Napoleon stood now at the height of his power and pride. All seemed to go well with him, except in Spain and Portugal, where his best generals could not stand against Wellington. The kings and princes of Europe

were his vassals. The French, blinded by his splendid victories, were almost his slaves. But now, in his rash presumption, he tempted fortune too far. Russia having failed to obey his decrees shutting out British commerce, in A.D. 1812 he invaded that distant country with an army half a million strong, made up not only of French soldiers, but of Germans, Italians, Poles, and other nations forced into his service, more or less unwillingly.

With this enormous host he marched into the heart of Russia, the czar's troops usually retreating before him and carrying off all supplies. He entered Moscow, the ancient capital of the country, where he hoped to make peace. But the Russians simply waited till winter should come upon their enemy; and too late Napoleon saw how cold and hunger were more than a match for the most skilful general. Moscow was set on fire by its own inhabitants, to hasten the foreigners' retreat over the snowy plains. Terrible were the sufferings of that retreat in an unusually severe winter. Men and horses died in thousands on every day's march, weakened by famine and disease, frozen to death, or attacked by the hardy Cossack horsemen hovering about their rear. The mighty host shrunk up into a ragged, starving mob, and not one-twentieth part of them came out of Russia alive.

The emperor, with characteristic selfishness, had deserted his ruined army, hurrying on ahead to Paris, where he set about raising fresh troops. It seemed as if his despotism must now come to an end. Austria and Prussia, lately so submissive to his power, declared war against him; and the people of other German states rose in arms, eager to shake off the oppression of France. Some of the German princes, indeed, stuck to Napoleon for a time; but in the battles that followed, their troops

were found ready to go over to their countrymen. The emperor had again gathered an army of hundreds of thousands, with which he resolutely faced his enemies in Germany, till at Leipsic they closed upon him for the great "Battle of Nations", lasting three days, at the end of which the routed French fled back to their own country (A.D. 1813).

It was now France's turn to be invaded by the allies. With hastily-raised regiments of young recruits, Napoleon still showed wonderful courage and generalship; but he could not resist the huge forces brought against him. Into the south of France, also, Wellington was advancing from his victories in Spain. The country could no longer bear the burden of a war that had cost it so dear. The emperor's own generals began to turn against him. When the allies captured Paris, he gave up the struggle, abdicating his imperial throne; then Louis XVIII, the heir of the Bourbon royal family, was brought back from exile that had lasted a quarter of a century.

Napoleon had been sent to the little island of Elba in the Mediterranean, where, really a prisoner, he was to play harmlessly at being a prince, and it was supposed that no more would be heard of him. But before a year passed, while the allied powers were still rearranging the map of Europe on which that conqueror had made so many changes, he secretly escaped, to land in the south of France with a few faithful soldiers. At the sight of him the French forgot the troubles he had brought upon them, remembering only his victories. The troops sent to capture him went over to his side. Every day his forces swelled like a snowball, as he marched through the country. The new king hurried away from Paris; and the emperor entered it in triumph, no one daring to oppose him.

Thus in March, 1815, began what is called the Hundred Days, for so long did this reign last. Soon at the head of a large army, Napoleon marched into Belgium to attack the British and Prussian forces gathered there. At first he won some successes, but on the 18th of June, at Waterloo near Brussels, Wellington stood out for hours against the charges of the French cavalry, till in the evening the Prussians under Blucher came up, and what had seemed on the point of being a victory for the French, was turned into an utter defeat, that ended this short war.

Napoleon fled to Paris, where now the French were no longer willing to make further sacrifices for his ambition. Not knowing where to turn for refuge, and loth to become a prisoner of the continental princes whom he had so often conquered and humiliated, the emperor surrendered himself on board an English ship of war. The allied armies again occupied Paris, and under their protection the Bourbon kings once more came back to the throne.

This time, to keep him out of the way of doing further harm, Napoleon was sent as a prisoner to the distant island of St. Helena, in the South Atlantic. There he lived in great discontent, making peevish complaints of the way he was treated, and showing little repentance for all the slaughter and suffering he had brought not only on France but on nearly every country in Europe. After a few years he died (1821), and was buried on the island; but a quarter of a century later, his body was brought home to France to be placed in a magnificent tomb, which is one of the chief sights of Paris.

The French are so easily dazzled by military glory,

that they still honour the memory of this conqueror, who did them so much harm. How much harm he did France was not seen till nearer our own time, when a nephew of the great Napoleon, on the strength of his name, was able to make himself emperor under the title of Napoleon III. Napoleon II had been that poor boy the king of Rome, who never really reigned in France, and died young. The second emperor, best known as Louis Napoleon, tried to keep his throne by stirring up the hatred which those long wars had left between the French and the Germans. But he was no great soldier like his uncle; and when he went to war with Germany, France had to suffer what she formerly inflicted on other countries. The Germans beat the French in almost every battle, captured the emperor, besieged and took Paris, and declared themselves a united people by crowning their leader, the king of Prussia, as Emperor of Germany. Then France, having got rid of her unlucky sovereign, again became a republic, that, after her many misfortunes, has now stood firm and prosperous for the life of a generation.

### Wellington

A.D. 1769-1852

As Nelson was our chief fighter by sea in these wars, so our champion by land was Arthur Wellesley, afterwards Duke of Wellington, who in the end overthrew Napoleon, the victor in so many battles. Both these British heroes were very different men from the French conqueror, for while he loved to talk of glory, their watchword was duty; and while they truly served their country by land and sea, he made his countrymen the servants of his ambition.

The son of an Irish nobleman, whose family name was originally the same as that of the religious reformer, Wesley, our future hero went to school at Eton, and entered the army just before the French Revolution. His first distinguished services were far away in India, where, A.D. 1803, he won the battle of Assaye, and gained such a reputation that when Spain revolted against France, he led the army we sent to help the Spaniards and Portuguese. Sir Arthur Wellesley won the battle of Vimeiro (A.D. 1808), after which the French had to leave Portugal; but then another general was put over him, and he went home without yet having a fair chance to show his ability.

But next year, after the death of Sir John Moore at Corunna, Britain began to go more heartily into that long struggle known as the Peninsular war. Wellesley was sent back in chief command, and soon proved himself fit for it. His first great victory was at Talavera (A.D. 1809), where he beat the French thoroughly, and was rewarded by the title of Lord Wellington. For several years to come he led our army from one success to another, gaining further steps in the peerage till he was made Duke of Wellington and Field-Marshal, the highest rank in the British army.

It was slow and difficult work fighting the French in the Peninsula, for the Spanish and Portuguese troops, though full of rage against the invaders, did not make the best of soldiers and allies, and the British general had to depend mainly on his own courage, patience, and caution. He was not always well backed up from home, where a good many people were against the war, thinking that we had better leave the nations of the Continent to settle their quarrels among themselves. Usually he

was outnumbered by the enemy; and at the height of his success he had no more than 100,000 men. Napoleon kept on sending huge armies into the Peninsula under his best generals, but they always found the British leader a match for them.

In the mountainous promontory at the point of which Lisbon stands, Wellington formed a stronghold called the lines of Torres Vedras, making three rows of defensive works along the top of it, the other sides being protected by the sea. When the French were too many for him, he drew back into this fortified country, where the enemy could not follow him. The British troops could always if necessary escape by sea, from which also they got supplies; but the French army found itself in danger of being starved in a poor country, whose people had hidden themselves among the woods and mountains, and all their provisions had been carried off by order of Wellington. The French, thus brought to a stand, soon grew so much discouraged that some of the British officers were eager to sally out and attack; but their leader knew better; he simply left the enemy to waste away by famine and sickness till they had to retreat, looking more like a host of scarecrows than soldiers.

This defence was one of Wellington's greatest achievements, for in war a general's skill is shown not only in winning battles but in keeping out of them, if that seems best, and in prudently falling back before an enemy too strong to be faced. More than once Wellington had to retreat, but he managed so well that he is said never to have lost an English gun. When strong enough to advance, he won battles that made the British army famous, as did also the storming of fortified

towns, like Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz on the frontier of Spain. The French, who had conquered so many other nations, in this one corner of Europe alone met with steady resistance, the soul of which was Wellington. Yet, strange to say, Napoleon never himself offered to encounter that most formidable foe in the Peninsula, but left the war to be carried on by his generals and his brother Joseph, a much less able man than himself, whom he had made king of Spain.

Wellington bit by bit carried the war from Portugal into Spain, where, A.D. 1812, he won the great victory of Salamanca. The usurping king took to flight, and the British entered the Spanish capital, Madrid. They had next to push the French out of the north of Spain, a task that was not so difficult, the emperor by this time having his hands full of the Russian campaign, with its terrible losses. While Napoleon was being attacked in Germany, Wellington won another great battle at Vittoria, then fought his way across the frontier into France, which now became invaded from the north by the Germans and Russians. The last British victory, at Toulouse, in the south of France, was a useless one, for peace had been already secured by the abdication of Napoleon (A.D. 1814); but the news of this had not reached Wellington in time to prevent a slaughter of brave men, for which he was afterwards sorry. This great soldier had no love for fighting in itself: one of his wise sayings was that a defeat is only more sad than a victory.

The Peninsular war being ended, the Duke of Wellington, as he now was, went home to be welcomed with all honour and gratitude. Next year, when Napoleon came back to his short reign of "the Hundred

Days", no one seemed so fit as Wellington for command of an army hastily gathered in the Netherlands to oppose this new danger for the peace of Europe.

The best of generals might here have found himself taken at too great disadvantage. Wellington had only about 20,000 British troops, and these mostly raw recruits, many of the Peninsular veterans having been discharged or sent off to an unlucky war with America. The bulk of his forces were Germans and Belgians, some of them half-inclined to go over to the emperor, under whom they had served in former wars. The Austrian and Russian armies could not reach the scene of action for some time, whereas Napoleon soon crossed the frontier of Belgium with a stronger army than Wellington's. His Prussian allies, under Blucher, were close at hand, but they allowed themselves to be beaten at Ligny, the day after Wellington had been obliged to fall back from his first encounter with the French at Quatre Bras. Thus the campaign had begun ill, when, on June 18, 1815, our army was drawn up on the plain of Waterloo, about 12 miles from Brussels, which had been its head-quarters. Napoleon had rather over 70,000 men, Wellington rather less, and these not all to be trusted. But if he could only hold his ground for a day, he might expect the Prussians to come up to his aid.

Now for the first time the two greatest generals of the age met one another in what was to be the last battle for each of them. The ground was soaked by heavy rain, which delayed the movements of both the French and the Prussian armies. At noon Napoleon began his attack by a heavy artillery fire, and by assaulting a mansion and a farmhouse which were the advanced posts of the British line. Fierce struggles took place

round these points, and the cavalry of both armies had some deadly encounters. What most of the British infantry had to do was to stand still for hours, pounded at by cannon, and charged by regiments of cuirassiers, at whose approach they formed into squares bristling with bayonets, and volleying bullets upon the brave horsemen that in vain tried to break their firm ranks. The French cavalry lost heavily in these charges; but so did our infantry, and it seemed as if Wellington's line could not hold out through the long summer day against the repeated onsets of the enemy.

But at last our anxious general heard the cannon of the Prussians coming into action on the French right. Late in the evening Napoleon tried one final charge with his Guard, the flower of the army, who hitherto had been kept in reserve. But this attack failed; then, as the enemy wavered, Wellington ordered an advance along his whole line. The French, who had fought gallantly all day, suddenly lost heart and fled in a tumultuous mob, each man eager to save himself, and the emperor setting them an example.

They had lost fifteen thousand men, and hundreds of their guns were taken on the field or by the Prussians pursuing them all night. Our army, too, suffered so sorely that half of Britain was said to be thrown into mourning. Even the "Iron Duke", as he has been named, burst into tears when he came to hear the long list of dead and wounded. But their blood saved Europe from many another sanguinary battle, for on that day the power of Napoleon had been broken for ever.

Wellington had never again to command an army in war. "The Duke", as he was henceforth familiarly called by his countrymen, lived to a good old age,

always ready to serve his sovereign as best he could. He was less successful as a statesman than as a general; and for a time he became unpopular with many of the people, who perhaps forgot what their fathers owed to him. But all such ill-feelings had been lived down when he died in the middle of last century, and was buried in St. Paul's with the mournful respect of the whole nation, for which his life made such an example how—

“Not once or twice in our rough island story,  
The path of duty was the way to glory”.







